

Kent on Sunday

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West Edition No 604

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Remarkable rise of the 'eco-coffin'

Why more of us are opting for a greener final farewell

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Primary school places agony

Hundreds of parents face pain of missing out

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Why God continues to be big box office

How we've never lost faith with stories from The Bible

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Easter brings with it the thorny issue of faith in Christianity

AMONG the hundreds of emails we receive each and every day, there was one this week which revealed that, in the south east, around one in four children didn't know the reason we celebrate Easter.

Now, it's not unreasonable to say that in an increasingly secular society we will find ourselves drifting away from religious cornerstones around which the nation once revolved.

And indeed there was, perhaps just 15 years ago, a very real sense that we were becoming a society where faith was playing less of a role and religion, of all sorts, was fading into the background.

Today, however, faith is once again a major player. It has become headline news again. And rarely for good reasons. Religion's ability to divide, frighten and spark conflict remains undimmed it would seem.

Yet while an increasing number look to disassociate

themselves with our Christian belief system in this country, the reality is that we should - on this weekend of all weekends - ask ourselves why?

Because for all of Christianity's faults - and there are many - it has bound us together for centuries. It has determined our laws and, in modern times, preached messages of forgiveness and understanding.

It may be a background influence today, but it exists largely as a force for good - at least for those who are prepared to adapt the teachings of

The Bible to our diverse and vibrant society and not take every word so literally.

We should, perhaps, not be so quick to shrug its influence off completely. Or, indeed, condemn it.

It is, after all, ingrained within our culture; what makes us British.

So let's hope, soon, all children realise there's more to Easter than eggs.

Have a good weekend.



Editor **Chris Britcher**

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"Fitters were courteous and helpful, answered any questions or queries, kept site as clean and tidy as possible. Many thanks for a good service."
Mrs Murphy, Maidstone

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Family gather to bid final farewell to Peaches Geldof

By Chris Murphy

editorial@kosmedia.co.uk

A PRIVATE funeral service will take place on Easter Monday for tragic Peaches Geldof - the daughter of Live Aid hero Bob who died earlier this month.

It will take place in the church which adjoins the family home in Faversham and which has seen some of the highs and lows of the county's famous family.

Ms Geldof was just 25 when her body was found at the home in Wrotham she shared with her husband Thomas Cohen and two young sons - Astala, 23 months, and Pheadra, 11 months. It is understood Pheadra was alone with his mother at the time of her death.

A post mortem failed to confirm the cause of her death. Toxicology reports are expected back soon which it is hoped will shed more light on just what happened.

Her family have been left devastated by her loss.

But they will gather to bid her an emotional final farewell at the church in Davington - St Mary Magdalene and St Lawrence - on Monday.

The church is attached to the



FAREWELL: Bob Geldof will join his family at the service to take place in Faversham tomorrow

family's rural retreat where Peaches grew up and which has always acted as a refuge for the family when they faced the sometimes suffocating glare of the media spotlight.

Those attending will be only too aware of the bittersweet memories the church holds for the Geldof family.

Peaches' mother, the TV presenter Paula Yates, died after an accidental heroin overdose in 2000. It was Faversham where her

memorial service took place. She was just 41.

She had married Bob Geldof in 1986 in Las Vegas - with their wedding being blessed at the church amid a star-studded guest list which included the likes of David Bowie, Bono and George Michael.

The marriage between Ms Yates and Mr Geldof had broken down several years earlier after she began a high-profile relationship with INXS singer Michael Hutchence. He was found dead in a

Sydney hotel room in 1997. His death devastated Ms Yates. They had a daughter, Tiger Lily. Following Ms Yates' death, Tiger Lily was adopted by Mr Geldof and raised alongside his other daughter - Fifi, Peaches and Pixies.

Peaches Geldof, a successful journalist, model and TV presenter, married musician Thomas Cohen at the church in 2012.

Reports suggest Peaches' ashes will be scattered in the family garden where she played as a child.

Two young women are killed as investigation into M26 crash goes on

A MAJOR probe continues this weekend into the circumstances leading up to a deadly pile-up on the M26 motorway on Wednesday, which left two young women dead and several others fighting for their lives.

The crash occurred just after 9.30am on the London-bound section of the motorway which links the M20 with the M25.

Five vehicles were involved - two lorries, a box van and two cars.

Inside one of those cars was a French family who had arrived for a day trip.

Two women - one aged 16, the other 22 - were both killed. It is understood their parents are both seriously injured.

They are among seven other casualties, all of whom were rushed to hospital in London suffering serious injuries. Three, by Friday morning, remained in a critical condition.

It caused huge problems to the road - a key link for people trying to

get to Gatwick - and left many people stranded for the day.

The road was completely closed in both directions for much of the day as crash investigators sifted through the wreckage, and a major clean-up operation took place.

It was not until 4am on Thursday morning that both carriageways were fully re-opened again.

One man, a 45-year-old lorry driver, was arrested and questioned by police.

On Friday morning he was released on bail, pending further investigations, until August 15.

Chief Inspector Matt Kendall from Kent Police said: "We appreciate that some members of the public were inconvenienced for some time but, in light of the tragic circumstances of the incident, we had a duty to conduct a thorough and detailed investigation at the scene.

"We worked with other emergency services to free traffic from the area and to reopen the road as quickly as possible."

MP insists there is still hope for Manston despite threat

SIR Roger Gale says he remains confident Manston Airport can be sold off as a going concern after holding a 'lengthy' meeting with its owner Ann Gloag in London.

The North Thanet MP met Ms Gloag, who founded the Stagecoach empire, for the first face-to-face talks since she confirmed her plans to shut the site - just six months after taking it over.

The airport is reported to be

losing £10,000 a day.

The Tory MP said: "It is clear from the figures that I have now seen...the loss of some anticipated revenue streams has placed the operators in a difficult financial position.

"I believe, though, that there is genuine care for the future of the staff and goodwill towards the airport as a going concern."

The airport employs 150 staff.

Easter engineering work to play havoc with rail services

TRAIN firm Southeastern is warning of disruption to services this weekend due to engineering works.

It means no services from Kent going in or out of Waterloo East or Charing Cross over the holiday weekend.

The work is being undertaken by Network Rail which is looking to get the work completed outside of the traditional peak

commuter times.

Services heading to the key London terminals will instead be diverted to Cannon Street.

The line between Sole Street/ Strood and Gillingham will also be shut, affecting Medway line services into Victoria and St Pancras, as work continues to build a new station at Rochester.

Services will return to normal on Tuesday.



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Don't fall victim to menace of the rogue trader

KENT County Council Trading Standards is promoting a month-long 'Say No' campaign to crack down on rogue traders.

It comes as the weather begins to improve and the unscrupulous begin to exploit the vulnerable by offering to do work before ratcheting up the price.

The campaign is supported by the police and Citizens' Advice.

KCC Trading Standards manager Richard Strawson said: "We are urging everyone to be on their guard against rogue traders, who can bring misery and financial loss to their victims. They may appear charming and will try to talk you into agreeing to the work, but please do not be taken in by them.

"If you need some work doing, always use recommended tradesmen."



BUSY: Roads and ports to feel the strain

Beaches are given clean bill of health after major survey into water quality

By Chris Murphy

d b

OUR beaches are still some of the finest in the UK, according to the latest water-quality survey – but four are still coming up short.

It follows the release of the latest nationwide report from the Marine Conservation Society.

It grades all of Britain's beaches according to their cleanliness. The ratings run from 'recommended' through 'guideline' and 'mandatory' to 'fail'.

None of Kent's beaches are bad enough to fail, but four come in the mandatory category, which means that they have the minimum water quality.

These are Littlestone and St Mary's Bay, both in the Folkestone area, along with Viking Bay in Broadstairs and Walpole Bay, Margate.

The Bay, in Margate, is a little better, reaching the 'guideline' standard.

Our 26 other beaches are all recommended – the highest category –



CLEAN: Our beaches score well

with every test coming back showing good water standard. These are in the areas of Folkestone, Dover, Deal, Thanet, Herne Bay and Whitstable and Sheppey.

The Environment Agency said:

"Bathing-water quality in Kent has improved significantly over the past two decades, but there is still more that needs to be done.

"The Environment Agency is working to protect and improve bathing-water quality, but this can only be delivered in partnership with others."

The Marine Conservation Society's Good Beach Guide has a record number of UK bathing beaches with the charity's top water-quality award after the driest summer since 2003, saying they have excellent water quality for taking a dip.

In fact, it recommended 538 out of 734 UK beaches tested during last summer – 135 more than the previous year. Just 14 failed.

MCS coastal pollution officer Rachel Wyatt said: "Kent has one more 'recommended' beach this year over last year, so it is heading in the right direction.

"Our findings just show how great our beaches can be.

"The main challenge now is maintaining these standards."

Sinkhole, six metres deep, appears in road

THE county is developing something of a reputation for sinkholes after another huge gaping hole appeared this week.

Diversions had to be put in place after a six-metre-deep hole in Elaine Avenue, Strood, appeared, which in turn caused a main sewer to collapse.

It was so deep that workmen looking to repair it had to be lowered in by a crane.

Southern Water has had a team seeking to repair the damaged section of the pipe since the hole emerged on Tuesday.

Once the sewer is fixed and the hole filled in, Medway Council will have to resurface the road.

It all comes just months after a huge hole appeared in the middle of the M2 between Faversham and Sittingbourne.

That 15ft hole forced a section of the motorway in both directions to be closed while work took place to ensure it was safe. The constant rain was blamed for disturbing the ground below.

Indecent act on train sparks police probe

POLICE are hunting a pervert who performed an "indecent act on himself" in broad daylight while sat staring at a woman passenger.

British Transport Police (BTP) want to hear from anyone who can help following the incident on the train between Waterloo East and Orpington on Wednesday, April 9, just after 1pm.

The victim, a 43-year-old woman, was travelling towards Petts Wood station at the time.

During the journey the woman noticed a man staring intently at her, making her feel "extremely uncomfortable".

PC Michael Willoughby said: "The woman was frightened by the man and moved into another carriage, but he followed her and sat next to her. She then noticed he had his hand down the front of his trousers and was performing an indecent act on himself – all the time staring at the woman."

The offender was black, aged about 50, about 5ft 10in tall, of large build and had short hair that was almost shaved bald.

Heroin and cocaine in spa-town crackdown

EIGHT people have been arrested in a clampdown on drug-dealing in Tunbridge Wells, with almost 50 wraps of suspected heroin and crack cocaine seized from one man.

Plain-clothes officers worked alongside uniformed police to catch dealers who were travelling into the town from other areas – five of the men arrested were from London.

Chief Inspector Dave Pate, district commander for Tunbridge Wells, said: "There is a significant element of drug-dealing that has resulted from people travelling into the town, who are often from London and part of a larger drug-dealing network.

"We believe many individuals are linked to gangs and perhaps wrongly saw Tunbridge Wells as an easy target."

The 32-year-old from Kilburn, from whom almost 50 wraps of drugs were allegedly seized when he was stopped near Quarry Road, will appear in court on June 9, charged with drug possession with intent to supply.

agenda

What will make next week's headlines...

School plans on show to serve development

PARENTS can find out more about a proposed new primary school in Tunbridge Wells at a drop-in session on Thursday.

The school would serve the Knights Wood development for Knights Park, where hundreds of new homes are due to be built.

It is expected to have a capacity of just over 200 children and, if all

goes to plan, would look to be open and ready to accept children for the start of the 2015 academic year – next September.

This week's event – described as a planning consultation and information drop-in session – will take place on Thursday, April 24, at the TN2 Community Centre on Greggswood Road.



The school is set to be an academy with a management team unveiled next month.

Those wishing to find out more, or to have a say on the proposals, can visit from 4.30pm to 7.30pm.

Shadow minister on visit over airport proposals

SHADOW transport secretary Mary Creagh will be visiting Medway on Wednesday.

She will visit to hear first-hand from those opposed to proposals to build a multi-billion-pound international airport hub in the Thames estuary.

During her visit, she will meet local campaigners,

including representatives from the RSPB and Friends of the North Kent Marshes.

She will be joined by various local Labour Party figures, among them council Labour group leader Vince Maple, Paul Clark, who is aiming to win back his Gillingham seat, and Rochester candidate for Westminster, Naushabah Khan.

...also

Quiz our health chiefs

YOU can question members of the NHS West Kent Clinical Commissioning Group's senior team on Tuesday.

The group, responsible for health budgets, will meet at the River Centre in Tonbridge from 12.45pm. Two members of the governing body will be available.

Work begins on the A20

WORK to improve journeys on a section of the A20, near the M20 and M25, will take place from Tuesday (April 22) until May 7.

The road is being resurfaced in both directions between junction 3 of the M25 at Swanley and the A224 near Sidcup. Diversions will be in place.

...and junction of M2

THERE will be work, too, taking place on the busy junction 5 of the M2 at the Stockbury roundabout.

Work starts overnight from Tuesday until mid-May. Work will see resurfacing and the installation of devices to help improve traffic flows around the roundabout.

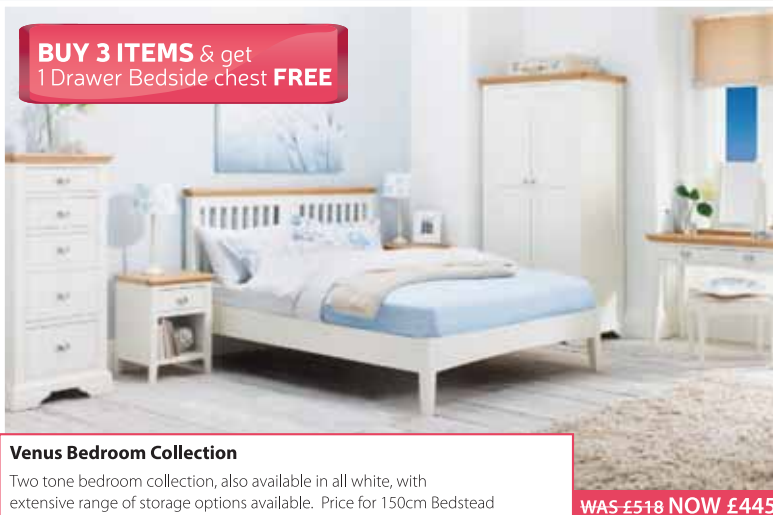
PCC youth group grants

APPLICATIONS will begin to come in this week after Kent Police and Crime Commissioner Ann Barnes unveiled a cash pot offering grants of up to £10,000 per year for projects that help keep young people from crime and antisocial behaviour. See her website for more.

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NEW VISION: A glimpse into what Sittingbourne town centre could become

Spirits raised as regeneration of town centre builds momentum

SITTINGBOURNE is once again the subject of a regeneration focus, as town bosses give the green light for the first phase of a major overhaul of the town centre.

It comes hot on the heels of the collapse of a hugely ambitious scheme last year which was spearheaded by major investment from supermarket giant Tesco.

However, it pulled the plug on the scheme in a move which effectively deflated the entire project.

Now, however, fresh proposals are back on the table.

Swale Borough Council has given the nod to phase one getting under way, and now the planning process has begun.

Leading the proposals is the Spirit of Sittingbourne consortium.

It was put together by the council to examine its land portfolio and how best to use it to breathe new life into the tired town centre.

Created in 2011, the consortium consists of developer the Cathedral Group and property consultancy Essential Land.

It aims to consolidate car parks into one multi-storey building, thus liberating some of the land for housing and to enable it to create a fresh new look and feel to the town.

Key to the proposals will be a multi-screen cinema and a number of restaurants.

The hope is that by creating leisure destinations, drawing people in from across the area, it will have a beneficial effect to all businesses in the town.

One of the first parts of the scheme will be to improve the sight which greets visitors coming off the train.

Currently they come face-to-face with several lanes of busy roads and the back of retail outlets.

Swale council is already calling this ambitious scheme "the building blocks for Sittingbourne regenera-

Tesco's decision to withdraw its ambitious plan to transform Sittingbourne town centre left the whole area in limbo, but a new venture could revitalise that hope, writes **Chris Murphy**

tion", but it will be cautious of letting down the townsfolk after the disappointment of the Tesco-led project.

However, if all goes to plan work will begin next spring.

Council leader Andrew Bowles said: "This is a landmark step in the right direction for the development of Sittingbourne. We firmly believe phase one of the development will bring a boost to the local economy and encourage businesses in to the area.

"Spirit of Sittingbourne has been working hard to reach a position where we are now able to move plans forward.

"We accept there have been delays, but the work that has been carried out has been done so thoroughly to ensure these developments can progress in the right manner."

Rob Sloper, from Spirit of Sittingbourne, added: "A lot of work has gone into ensuring the plans for this development have got to this stage.

"Now we can start to push on with

“A lot of work has gone into ensuring the plans for development have got to this stage. Now we can push on with phase one and make them a reality”

Rob Sloper, from consortium the Spirit of Sittingbourne

TESCO BLOW

THE Tesco Extra development for Milton Creek was the linchpin of the last major attempt to transform the town.

The supermarket chain's role was significant, as not only was it planning to extend the Forum shopping centre, which it owns, but it intended to build a bridge linking the development in Milton Creek with the town centre – a key part of making the town's heart more vibrant and accessible.

It was a year ago this month it confirmed it was pulling out of the £110m Sittingbourne project as a consequence of its profits being hit by an ill-fated foray into the US market place.

It was the final blow for a scheme which had already been put on hold due to the Highways Agency raising concerns about traffic problems created by the new development.

But the council refused to give up hope, bravely saying at the time "phase one continues" – many felt in hope more than expectation.

For the people of Sittingbourne, and the benefit of one of the county's major towns, there will be a collective crossing of fingers that, this time, things work out.

phase one of the plan and make the regeneration plans a reality."

A spokesman for developers the Cathedral Group explained what people can expect.

He said: "The new cultural quarter, civic quarter with a new library, brand new public realm throughout the town centre and residential schemes will generate £250 million of economic improvement over the next 10 years, and will create 1,100 jobs."

Among the plans due to be completed in 2017 is a cultural quarter where the railway station forecourt is, plus an eight-screen cinema, and up to eight restaurants in what is now the car park for the Forum shopping centre.

Parking for 240 vehicles will be catered for at a nearby linked multi-storey that may also be used by rail commuters. An entertainment centre called the Venue will include space for exhibitions.

It is the cultural offerings which many in Sittingbourne will claim are so desperately needed.

Proposals in the past aimed to create a 'cafe culture' in the town, transforming its atmosphere.

To help pay the estimated £60m-plus cost, houses will be built on Spring Street, Cockleshell Walk and Station Street car parks.

Also being proposed is up to six retail units and 100 parking spaces on the former waste depot site behind the station.

A second phase could see the library and Phoenix House replaced with a new council headquarters, including a new library, community

meeting rooms and a gateway centre for public services.

Swale council said there will now be an extensive public consultation to ensure the building is used for what the community wants.

It points out the current council offices, at Swale House, are no longer fit for purpose and the life span of the building is coming to its end.

It is suggested the new council offices will be built in the 'Gateway-style' which amalgamates a host of council facilities in one, central location.

The authority said the new council building is not a priority and increasing footfall into the town to benefit existing businesses is the main aim.

Pete Raine, the council's director of regeneration, said: "We are delighted cabinet members have agreed the recommendations which will now allow Spirit of Sittingbourne to push forward with the plans for phase one of the development.

"This first phase will see the introduction of a new eight-screen cinema and recreational facilities, including a cultural quarter, thus increasing the footfall of visitors to Sittingbourne which will undoubtedly benefit our existing local businesses."

The first phase will also include working with partner agencies including the Highways Agency on road improvements, and National Rail with improvements to the train station and surrounding area.

Rob Sloper, from the consortium, added: "We can now move on to the preparation work needed to submit a planning application. There is a great deal of work to undertake before then, but we hope to submit the application before the end of this year.

"If things go as expected, we would look to start work in March next year, with a view to completion of the first phase by June 2017."

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COMFORTING: For a growing number of people, eco-coffins like the woven one pictured (left) are a more environmentally-friendly and comforting option than more traditional coffins (right)

As sales rise we lift lid on the eco-friendly coffin business

It's partly environmental concerns and partly the look, says Sittingbourne's Ecoffins, which leads the way in green caskets with sales of between 10,000 and 12,000 a year. **Sarah Linney** delves deeper.

IT HAS intrigued and terrified humans for as long as they have existed and remains one of the great taboo topics.

But a Kent company is leading the way in trying to make the passage from this life to the next more peaceful by selling eco-friendly coffins.

Ecoffins, based in Milstead, near Sittingbourne, was the first company in the UK to sell 'green' coffins and now supplies 2 per cent of the coffins used in this country each year – between 10,000 and 12,000.

Made from natural materials ranging from bamboo to wild pineapple, all the company's products are completely biodegradable and managing partner William Wainman says they can look much more appealing than traditional caskets.

"It's partly the environmental side that appeals to people, and partly the look," he said.

"We often hear people say they look comforting as they are woven with a texture a bit like a woolly jumper."

It would appear it is playing a part in a shift in the way we move on.

In 2012, The Guardian reported that about 50,000 green funerals were being held each year in the UK – twice the number five years before.

As well as eco-coffins, green funerals often involve burials in natural

burial grounds. Some people do not have a coffin at all but choose a shroud instead.

Eco-coffins come in a variety of shapes, ranging from a traditional shape to one with rounded ends or a pod shape, and can be made from bamboo, willow, pandanus, banana leaf, cardboard or pine. How long they take to biodegrade depends on the material used as well as the type of soil they are buried in.

It's a far cry from the half-dozen caskets Mr Wainman put together when his Chinese manufacturing company, Wei Ming Furniture, took an unexpected order in the mid-1990s.

"We got this order for coffins, so I made half a dozen and shipped them

to the UK," he said. "But then the company that ordered them didn't want them, so we had half a dozen coffins in the warehouse. We sent them out to funeral directors and the response was excellent."

It was probably not the career path Mr Wainman had envisaged during his English language and literature degree at Aberdeen University.

He decided to go out to China as an English teacher after finishing his studies, met his wife Wei Ming – after whom the company is named – and realised he had to find a way to return to the country when his teaching contract ended.

"I never studied furniture-making, but I always had an interest in making things," he said.

"The only way I could have gone back to China was by starting my own business and I knew there was so much bamboo in the area, so starting my own business making bamboo furniture seemed to be a good way of doing so."

The coffins were such a success the company started to make more and more of them, manufacturing them in China and selling them in the UK.

"Gradually, we cut down the furniture until the coffins took over completely," Mr Wainman said.

"We were lucky that we got into the market – the green-coffin market is

very competitive and the furniture market is extremely competitive. We were glad to make anything, provided it was legal."

Ecoffins became a company in 1996, although it still trades under the name Wei Ming Furniture in China, where the bamboo coffins are still made.

The company has won awards from the Natural Death Centre and the Green Funeral Guide and its products have been featured on TV soap Emmerdale, the Jonathan Ross Show and the drama William And Mary.

It was also the first coffin-manufacturer to become a member of the World Fair Trade Organisation.

Mr and Mrs Wainman now live in the village of Bicknor. But Mr Wainman, 45, says he misses the eastern allure of his former home.

"We still have relations and friends in China and I loved it there," he said.

"It's a very interesting place to live. I loved the people's friendliness. I had expected them to be quite shy and mysterious, but they were far more open than I had expected."

At anywhere between £500 and £800, eco-coffins are not the cheapest on the market – a traditional chipboard coffin from a funeral director will cost less – but they are cheaper than expensive wooden ones, which if varnished are not biodegradable.

"People are prepared to pay a bit extra for the final product," Mr Wainman said.

"Some geographical areas seem to be more green than others and Kent is one of the best, along with Brighton, the West Country and some areas of Scotland. I think Kent is probably a forward-thinking county."

Last week, the company moved into a new, carbon-neutral office in Sittingbourne, designed by William Matthews, who was the site architect for The Shard in London.

Eco-friendly features include solar panels, LED lights with motion sensors that switch on when they are needed and a rainwater tank for irrigation and car-cleaning.

Cedar logs from the Royal British Legion Industries – based in Aylesford – were used to clad the outside of the warehouse and there are more than 500 trees and several beehives in the grounds.

The building was named Garland House after office manager Chris Garland and her husband Peter, also a former employee, who died last year.

"Chris has been the office manager for many years and we wanted to say thank you for the huge input they have both put into the company and its success," Mr Wainman said.

“It's partly the environmental side and partly the look. We often hear people say they look comforting... with a texture a bit like a woolly jumper”

William Wainman,
Managing partner, Ecoffins



Alternatives to traditional cemeteries

NATURAL burial grounds were invented in Britain in 1918 and are an alternative to traditional cemeteries.

The person is buried in a woodland, meadow or farmland or other conservation site in a coffin or shroud made of biodegradable materials. There are no visible indicators that the site is a burial ground, so there is no visible marking of the grave.

The idea is that it is not the grave that commemorates the life lived, it is the entire site. However, the position of the grave can be marked with an electronic chip, and some sites will let you mark the grave with a small, flat stone or a temporary wooden marker.

There are several natural burial grounds in Kent, including one at Deerton, near Sittingbourne, and one in Ashford next to Bybrook cemetery.

Mr Wainman estimated that about 40 per cent of Ecoffins customers opted for burial and that about half of those chose a natural burial ground.

Top 10 most popular songs for funerals:

1. **My Way** - Frank Sinatra
2. **Time to Say Goodbye** - Sarah Brightman & Andrea Bocelli
3. **Wind Beneath My Wings** - Bette Midler
4. **Over the Rainbow** - Eva Cassidy
5. **Angels** - Robbie Williams
6. **You Raise Me Up** - Westlife
7. **You'll Never Wake Alone** - Gerry & The Pacemakers
8. **We'll Meet Again** - Vera Lynn
9. **My Heart Will Go On** - Celine Dion
10. **Unforgettable** - Nat King Cole

Source: The Co-operative Funeralcare

Embalming, freezing and plastination... the burial options

FROM mummification in ancient Egypt to cryogenic freezing in modern-day America, there have always been alternatives to a traditional cremation or burial when you die.

The bodies of many historical figures, including Abraham Lincoln, Eva Peron and Diana, Princess of Wales, have been embalmed, which involves treating them with chemicals to prevent decomposition. Abraham Lincoln's features were still recognisable 36 years after his death.

A similar option, developed by German scientist Gunther von Hagens, is plastination, in which water and fat in your body are replaced

by plastics so the body does not decay and can still be touched.

A Glasgow company, Resomation, has been working with scientists in the US to develop the process of resomation, where the body is broken down chemically by a process called alkaline hydrolysis.

A funeral involving a resomation is similar to one involving a cremation, with the coffin being placed in a resomating machine rather than burnt. It produces ashes, which are placed in an urn and returned to relatives but uses less than a seventh of the energy required for a cremation and reduces emissions of greenhouse gases by

a third. However, it is not yet legal in the UK.

Cryonics involves preserving the body by using liquid nitrogen to keep it very cold.

The aim is that, with advances in medical science, one day the person can be brought back to life and cured of the condition that killed them.

There are no cryonics facilities in the UK, but people living in this country can arrange to have their bodies transported to the US after they die to be kept in a cryonics facility.

There is also the option of donating your body to medical science, removing the need for a funeral at all.

Great British sense of humour and eccentricity comes to fore at funerals

THE great British sense of humour doesn't desert us even in death and means our funerals are often quite unconventional, according to Charles Cowling, author of *The Good Funeral Guide*.

Mr Cowling, who unveiled a plaque and planted a tree at the opening of Ecoffins's new office last Thursday, says British people are often more prepared than other cultures to tailor a funeral to the person who has died.

"The British are one of the most creative peoples in their funeral arrangements," Mr Cowling said.

"It's part of the British sense of humour and our eccentricity or quirkiness. We have a disruptive sense of humour.

"If someone has worked on a digger all his life, it is quite likely that his family will be driven to the crematorium in the back of a digger.

"There is a huge collection of alternative hearses and coffins and we play naughty music, like Monty Python's *Always Look On The Bright Side Of Life*.

"It is defiant. We are sort of saying to death: 'Hey, look, I'm not frightened of you'."

Mr Cowling says more and more people are

choosing natural burial grounds and eco-coffins because they feel it makes their funerals more meaningful.

"It's about acknowledging that we are part of nature and going back to it," he said.

"We want to continue to be useful when we are dead and to give something back. It's a very positive contribution.

"Funerals are traditionally very sombre and frightening, but eco-coffins are beautiful to look at and are made of beautiful materials. They look friendly, comfortable and natural and they make a funeral a much softer affair.

"I think demand will increase a great deal. People want funerals that are personal."

The Good Funeral Guide is the first independent consumer guide to the funeral industry, said Mr Cowling, a funeral celebrant who works with families who do not want a traditional ceremony.

"I was sitting gazing out of the window and I thought 'There are no consumer guides to funerals, so I will write one'," he said.

"We live in very interesting times and it is very important that people have a good experience at a funeral."



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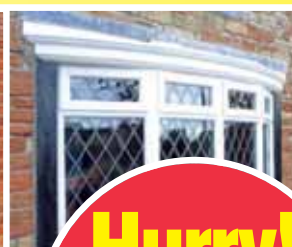
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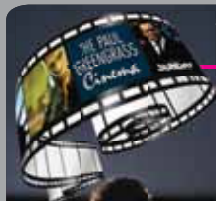
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Sir, why can I not attend the school at end of my road?

The county's primary places have just been allocated with most getting their school of choice but more than 900 parents missed out leaving many frustrated and angry. **Sarah Linney** reports



WHEN your child starts school, there are always mixed emotions. Pride in your son or daughter is often mixed with a pang of regret at how quickly they have grown up.

But for more than 900 parents across the county, the experience has turned sour before that day has even arrived – because the school they've been told their child must attend isn't where they want them to go.

Each year, parents across Kent whose children will start formal education the following September are asked to choose three schools they'd be happy for their child to attend and rank them in order.

Out of a total of 17,097 children, 16,301 were given one of the three schools their parents had named – their first choice in 14,516 of cases. In truth, that's the vast majority – 84 per cent get-

ting their top choice, and 95 per cent getting one of their top three.

But that leaves 796 families, plus others in Medway, where children have been placed in a school their parents haven't asked for – or failed to register a choice – and, unsurprisingly, it's a situation many find unacceptable.

Caroline Thomson's daughter Alice was refused a place at her first choice of Claremont Primary School in Tunbridge Wells, despite the family home in Farmcombe Close being just 350 yards away.

She has also been denied her second and third choices of St Peter's Primary School and St James's Infant School.

"We are very angry, frustrated and upset," said Mrs Thomson, 45.

"We are practically next to the school, and yet we have been given a school which is almost a mile and a half away. My daughter's friends

from nursery are all going to Claremont. "I didn't sleep all night. I was crying and wondering what to do now. All my friends are astounded by the decision."

Part of the problem is that the school took on an extra 30 reception pupils in 2012, but has now returned to its normal intake of 60.

Children who already have a sibling at a school are given priority even over those who live nearby, so the bumper intake has left a bumper legacy of younger brothers and sisters entitled to places at the school.

While few would dispute the appropriateness of such a policy, it means even fewer places are left for other children, no matter how close to the school they live.

"If we had lived four doors down the road we would have got in," said Mrs Thomson, who also has a 17-month-old son, Alexander.

"It's not a fair, sensible or logical situation. There are siblings who live streets away from us who are getting in at the expense of people who live closer.

"We moved to Kent so we could send our children to a school with a good reputation. We changed our whole lifestyle, left all our friends behind and moved even further away from my family in Yorkshire.

"Now we are faced with a school that's not one of our choices, and we feel like we are victims of a system where there is not enough planning."

Mrs Thomson says sending her daughter to the school she has been allocated will prevent her from doing the teacher training course she was planning to do in Dartford.

"All the schools involved in the course I wanted to do are in the Tonbridge and Maidstone area," she explained.

"But the school we have been given for Alice is on the other side of town, so I would be driving in one direction and then having to drive in the opposite direction to go to my course."

And with Tunbridge Wells traffic that is no easy

"I believe children should be treated as individuals and placements should be based on what's best for them."

Mike Shaw,
Disgruntled Canterbury parent

task. So adamant is she that the school is not a suitable choice that she says if she doesn't win her appeal her daughter won't start school this year.

"We hope to get on the waiting list for Claremont, and we are going to appeal the decision on the grounds of the distance, the going backwards and forwards and the pollution," she said.

"But otherwise, we don't have to send her to school until she is five, so we will probably keep her at nursery until then.

"She won't be with her peers and she will be behind, but I would rather keep her there as she is familiar with the nursery. But it's creating a huge amount of stress for my husband and me."

Mike and Rachel Shaw, from Canterbury, who are expecting again, have also been allocated a place for their son at a school which was not among their three choices.

Little Greyson has been going to the nursery attached to Wincheap Primary School for two years and the school seemed a natural and optimal choice. Instead he's been told he must go elsewhere.

"A lot of the nursery activities take place on the school grounds and within the school itself, so he is familiar with the journey to the school, the location and the staff. And a lot of his friends will be going there," Mr Shaw explained.

"It's our closest school in terms of walking, and the walk doesn't involve going near any major roads, whereas the school we have been given requires a far more dangerous walk

which involves crossing an A road and a B road.

"So my wife, who doesn't drive, is going to be walking with a four-and-a-half year old and a baby across two of the busiest roads in Canterbury.

"Greyson is four; he doesn't deal with change massively well. And I don't want him to have to start a new school where he doesn't know anyone, when there's a perfectly good school that he's already familiar with next to his nursery. It's going to be a huge upheaval for him at a time when his life is going to be in upheaval anyway because we will have a new baby."

The school had left Mr and Mrs Shaw with an extremely favourable impression so far and Mr Shaw says the couple had their hearts set on it.

"The school offers a really excellent education. The headmaster, Clive Close, has done an incredible job there," he said.

"I believe children should be treated as individuals and placements should be based on

what's best for them. Maybe for some children Wincheap isn't the best place – it all depends what level they're at and what they're good and bad at.

"But Greyson is a very bright boy and he deserves to be in a school that can nurture him. I very strongly believe that all children deserve the best possible start in life and that Wincheap would be best for him."

The couple have asked to be put on the waiting list for the school and are planning to appeal.

"We have been asked to make a choice and we put a lot of time and effort into that and gave solid reasons as to why these schools were suitable, but our thoughts were disregarded," Mr Shaw said.

"I hope that when we can talk more in depth and give more of a personal view then

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the appeals process will be beneficial.”

Roger Gough, Kent County Council's cabinet member for education, said he understood how difficult the situation was for parents.

“The overall picture is a good one. The overwhelming majority of people have got what they want,” he said.

“But I accept that if you are one of those who didn't, that is not much comfort to you.

“We always try to keep the number of children who don't get the school they wanted to a minimum.

“But although we have built in as much capacity as we can, there is a very strong demand for some schools – Claremont, for example, is very strongly oversubscribed.”

I ask him why every child doesn't just go to their local school, but he says this still wouldn't solve the problem.

“Admissions criteria do put an emphasis on being local. The system is still very strongly orientated towards that,” Cllr Gough said.

“But we would still have to build in the right level of capacity for each school, and they may still get overstretched.

“We are having to expand schools because of the increase in the number of reception age children coming in, and the schools we seek to expand are good or outstanding.

“But schools can't necessarily be expanded at will. It is not always physically possible, there will be constraints on the site.”

He agreed that for any parent, getting a school they didn't want for their child was always going to be unacceptable.

“But given the various things we seek to balance, I think it's a case of striving to achieve the absolute best we can,” he added.

“It's very difficult. I don't think there's an authority in the country that can say, hand on heart, they have one hundred percent of happy parents.

“This is not the end of the process. There are waiting lists and an appeals process and par-

THE SLIM CHANCE OF APPEAL SUCCESS

PARENTS have the legal right to appeal the county council's decision – but Kent on Sunday's education columnist Peter Read warns they are unlikely to be successful.

Out of 632 appeals last year, just 40 were upheld – the main difficulty being that, however popular the school, infant schools are legally not allowed to have more than 30 children in a class.

“It is almost impossible to win an appeal for an infant place and I will rarely get involved unless there is a possible case of maladministration,” said Mr Read, who advises on school admissions and appeals through his consultancy Kent Independent Education Advice.

“The panel is not supposed to uphold the appeal unless there are very exceptional circumstances.

“Your best chance of securing a place is through the waiting list process, although there is nothing to stop you pursuing both.”

‘Exceptional circumstances’ could mean that the school has broken the rules or made a mistake, another child has gained a place on the basis of fraudulent information, or the appeal panel decides that the county council has been unreasonable.

However, whereas the subjective nature of that last word may seem to offer a window of opportunity, the guidance states that a decision can only be ruled unreasonable if it was “perverse”, “beyond the range of responses open to a reasonable decision maker” or “so outrageous in its defiance of logic or accepted moral standards that no sensible person could have arrived at it”.

“It is very difficult because if the panel have followed the rules, they have been reasonable,” explained Mr Read, a former president of the Kent National Association of Headteachers.

“Many parents seek to challenge the rules, on the grounds that they have a very powerful case for being admitted to that school and not the one they have been allocated and that this should have taken priority over the rules, but this is not a valid argument.

“Circumstances unlikely to be exceptional include difficulty of travel, poor schools allocated, parental commitments, and children heading off in different directions. You can live in the middle of a town surrounded by six schools and if there are children closer you might not get any of them.”

ents should use all their best efforts to avail themselves of those. I can appreciate that if you are in that situation, our statements are deeply frustrating and irritating, but it is quite hard to see what else, beyond this, we could do.”

Council spokesman Mike Sherburn pointed out that standards could change and that schools which had had a bad Ofsted report three or four years ago might now be doing well, but parents might still be reluctant to apply there.

“If 300 families all want their children to go to a school with 60 places, we can't add three times as many places to a school,” he added.

“Nobody wants to be in a position where parents are not happy with their school, or where

children can't go to the school down the road. But we have six new schools planned and have added hundreds of places over the last few years. We are managing demand as much as we can.

“I think we have done a decent job – 14,000 parents getting their first choice isn't a bad effort.”

The figures were similar in Medway, where 95 per cent of the authority's 3,448 reception-age children secured a place at one of their three preferred schools, with 86 per cent given their first choice.

Medway council's portfolio holder for children's services, Mike O'Brien, explained that sometimes parents didn't get a school of their

choice because they had only listed one on the application form.

“We are constantly putting the message out to parents that just putting one school down does not mean they will get that school,” he said.

“The reality is that schools are of a certain size. We have enough places for everyone, but class sizes are restricted, we can't just go putting 50 in a class to satisfy everyone. We have already expanded quite a few of our primaries and have plans for more.

“I am extremely pleased and proud that 95 per cent of children were given one of their preferences, and the team have worked extremely hard to ensure that happened.”

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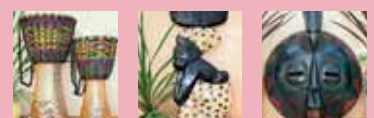
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Growth of foodbanks is proof of a nation battling poverty

IT HAS been almost seven years now since the economy nosedived and, as a society, we leapt from one of credit and free-spending to an era defined by austerity measures.

It has been a sobering period for all involved.

But all of the indicators to have demonstrated a nation struggling to balance the books – rising youth unemployment, interest rates suspended at rock bottom – there has emerged another far clearer sign: the foodbank.

Imagine, if you can, waking up in the morning and not knowing how you are going to feed your family that day.

Imagine being hungry and not having anything to eat in the house, nor any money to buy anything.

The assumption is it is something from the Third World. The reality is that this is a scenario facing many thousands of people right here in Kent. They don't have to imagine it. They're experiencing it right now.

Foodbank charity the Trussell Trust fed more than 7,000 people in the county between April and November last year. Yet two years previously, the figure was less than 200.

The numbers show no sign of slowing, and a Parliamentary inquiry into food poverty is under way.

You don't, however, have to go far to see those in real need resorting to foodbanks, where basic rations are handed to those who simply cannot afford to feed themselves or their families.

Ashford foodbank is open on Tuesdays and Fridays from 10am to noon in Mabledon Avenue, off Hythe Road. It feeds 150 to 200 people from across the borough every week.

The Rev Bob Weldon, priest of the G7 benefice of village churches just outside the town, is one of the directors, having been involved with the foodbank since he moved to the village of Westwell in January 2013.

We meet at the foodbank, where stacks of food are sorted and prepared.



POVERTY LINE:
Volunteers picking products for clients of the Ashford foodbank

Imagine not having any money for food and not knowing how to feed your family – it is this scenario that has seen the worrying growth in foodbanks. **Sarah Linney** investigates

"I've always been interested in social justice," the 57-year-old, who originates from Muirhead, explains. "It's something that's followed me all through my life, from working in soup kitchens in central Scotland when I was 16 to working in a night shelter in Croydon."

"We are a fairly vibrant foodbank. Probably about a quarter of the people who come to us are regulars, and we sometimes feed families with up to eight children."

"Since I started, the number of people we help has gone up by about 40 per cent, and it is increasing all

“ Since I started, the number of people we help has gone up 40 per cent. Spiralling costs and low and static wages mean people can't make ends meet ”

The Rev Bob Weldon,
Ashford foodbank

the time. Spiralling costs and low and static wages mean people just can't make ends meet."

Itrot out the familiar argument that we have a benefits system in this country and a minimum wage, and that there are plenty of people who believe, rightly or wrongly, that benefits are far too generous. What's not working?

"The differentials are widening between pay and benefits in relation to costs," Mr Weldon says.

"Benefits are not enough for people to live off, the minimum wage is not

enough for people to live off. Zero-hours contracts are disgraceful and are used by some companies so they don't have to pay people.

"There is genuine and acute poverty in the borough of Ashford and the rural areas that needs to be addressed. Family liaison officers in schools tell me that there are significant numbers of children turning up to lessons hungry. We also work with Age UK to address the very real issue of pensioner poverty. You have to walk in people's shoes before you can make a true judgement."

He gives me an example of a paramedic whose 20-year career ended when he was badly injured and unable to continue working.

"He received his pay for six months, then half his wages, then nothing," Mr Weldon tells me.

"There were benefit delays of six weeks when he first applied, so we were able to support him till his benefits came to him."

A common misconception is that people can just turn up at a foodbank and be given food, like children taking home party bags from a birthday.

In fact, you have to be referred by an organisation such as Jobcentre Plus, Sure Start, Citizens' Advice or a school family liaison officer who know your circumstances and your income. They will then give you a voucher which entitles you to sustenance from the foodbank.

The food supplied is intended to cater for voucher-holders and their families for three days. People are not supposed to come to the foodbank more than three times in a row, although Mr Weldon says they "tend to be a bit lenient".

"We never turn anyone away if they come with a voucher," he said.

"But we don't want people to become dependent on us. We have people at the front of house who will listen to them, including me, and we signpost them in the right direction to get further help."

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“ People are able to see people worse off than themselves. The millionaire who gives us £50 is not better than the hard-up lady who gives us £2 ”

The Rev Bob Weldon,

On collecting for the foodbank

“It feeds people both in a practical sense and in a psychological sense, because other people care about them.”

The foodbank is run by about 50 volunteers and all the provisions – hundreds of pounds’ worth every week – are donated by members of the public.

The borough’s churches have collection boxes and encourage their congregations to contribute; Specsavers and Tesco do the same and some companies hold collections among their staff. In addition, anyone who wants to can drop off food at the bank during opening hours.

Volunteers also collect in Tesco, asking customers as they go in if they will buy something for the bank and give it to them on the way out.

“I get away with it because I have a dog-collar on. People are not going to think I’m selling double-glazing,” Mr Weldon laughs.

“People are able to see people worse off than themselves. It keeps my faith

FOODBANKS... THE FACTS



POVERTY:

Foodbank volunteer Lorna Murray with a box for the needy

WHAT THE FOODBANK TAKES:

- Tinned food: *meat, fish, soup, vegetables, fruit, puddings*
- Pasta
- Rice
- Cereals
- Dried food
- Fruit juice (long life)
- Pasta sauces
- Milk: *UHT or powdered, not fresh*
- Sugar
- Tea bags
- Coffee
- Instant mashed potato
- Jam
- Biscuits and snack bars

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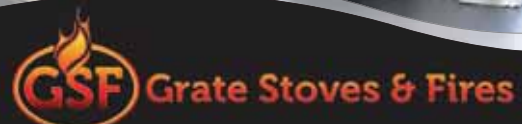


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HAMPER FOR: A SINGLE PERSON

- One small box of cereal
- Two cans of soup
- Two small cans of baked beans or spaghetti in tomato sauce
- Two small cans of tomatoes or bottles of pasta sauce
- Two small cans of vegetables
- Two small cans of meat (or a vegetarian equivalent)
- One small portion of pulses
- One small can of fish
- Two small cans of fruit
- One standard can of rice pudding
- One small packet of biscuits
- 500g of sugar
- 500g of pasta, rice or noodles
- 40 teabags or a small jar of instant coffee
- One carton of fruit juice
- One carton of UHT milk

HAMPER FOR: A FAMILY WITH THREE CHILDREN

- One large box of cereal
- Six cans or packets of soup
- Six cans of baked beans or spaghetti in tomato sauce
- Six cans of tomatoes or bottles of pasta sauce
- Five cans of vegetables
- Three cans of meat (or a vegetarian equivalent)
- Five cans of fish
- Three cans of fruit
- Two cans of rice pudding and custard
- Two cans of sponge pudding
- One large packet of biscuits
- One kilogram of sugar
- Two kilograms of pasta
- Two packets of instant mashed potato
- 160 teabags or the equivalent in instant coffee
- One carton of fruit juice
- Three cartons or one packet of UHT milk
- Extras if available: snacks, sauces, chocolate, jam, noodles

What exactly is the Trussell Trust?

THE Trussell Trust describes itself as working "to empower local communities to combat poverty and exclusion". It operates in the UK and Bulgaria.

A spokesman explains: "We work with the people that society forgets, providing practical help through sustainable projects and enabling each person to realise that they are valued."

"Our vision is to build communities where people of all backgrounds are included and have the opportunity to live in dignity with hope for the future."

"We are a Christian organisation motivated by Jesus's teaching on poverty and injustice. We operate according to Christian principles of compassion, honesty, integrity, openness, kindness and care of all people, regardless of backgrounds or beliefs."

"While we are a Christian organisation, we serve people of all faith groups and beliefs or none. We are passionate about inclusion and being non-judgemental is central to what we do. We believe everyone has the right to have food on their plate, dignity, skills, a chance to work and hope for the future."

For more about the trust, visit www.trusselltrust.org.

in humanity. The millionaire who gives us £50 is not better than the hard-up lady who gives us £2. I think women are more likely to give – there's a nurturing instinct in every female."

"We are just about meeting the need and we are well organised, but we need a regular supply – if the food stopped we would run out."

And it seems that the reverend's faith in humanity doesn't extend to the Government.

"We are picking up the slack left by the Government, who are avoiding their responsibilities," he says bluntly.

"There are many hungry people in this area and if David Cameron was here I would ask him what concerns that gave him and whether he could please put humanity before his politics."

Since its inception, the foodbank has been affiliated to nationwide charity the Trussell Trust but, due to the difficulty many people from outside Ashford have in travelling to the distribution point, from June the food will be distributed from centres across the borough.

The foodbank will also start to offer other services such as debt counselling and management and help obtaining better cooking facilities.

"One of our mottos is the art of the possible. We do as much as we can and we accept that there is only so much that we can do," Mr Weldon adds.

"People can email their MP and ask them to take their responsibilities to humanity more seriously."

"The bottom line is this: people are hungry and they need your help."

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Which of us can say we might



HELPING OUT: Reporter Sarah Linney sorts donations at the foodbank

Reporter **Sarah Linney** found out just what life was like for those giving and receiving the packages when she spent the morning volunteering at an increasingly necessary project

I imagine it to be huge. A vast hall, conspicuous and bustling, where the bedraggled and destitute queue for packets of rice and tins of beans.

The reality is far more subdued. As I turn into a residential street just outside the centre of Ashford, a small sign in the window of a former electrical shop tells me I have found the foodbank. I would have missed it if I had blinked.

I open the front door and step into a

“It suddenly hits me that, though we have never been rich, my family have been lucky. We have been and remain lucky because we can afford to eat”

Sarah Linney

On the reality of poverty

small, well-lit room with big windows and comfortable sofas and chairs. I can imagine waiting here to see the dentist, maybe – not to pick up boxes of provisions that, in 2014, I needed to keep my family from starving.

But this is what happens here, twice a week. This is where you come if you are, albeit temporarily, dependent on the generosity of your fellow human beings to live.

The Reverend Bob Weldon leads me through into the back room, where the donations are sorted.

There are tins and packets everywhere – on the table, in crates, in boxes and on shelves from floor to ceiling. I am surrounded by food.

One plastic box is full of bags of sugar. Another contains maybe a dozen Easter eggs, and yet another houses the food that has been donated with the best of intentions but is out of date. I spy a box of fig rolls and I smile – fig rolls always make me think of my gran.

My gran was the daughter of a miner and was a child during the Great Depression of the 1930s. She brought her family up in a council

house in a poor village in the north-east of England with little money to spare, but she always had enough food on the table.

She was never faced with the ignominy of being unable to feed her own children and it suddenly hits me that, though we have never been rich, my family have been lucky.

We have been lucky, and we remain lucky, because we can afford to eat.

“I wanted to help when I saw the publicity. I thought it was outrageous,” 69-year-old volunteer Rod Maynard tells me.

“We are supposed to be one of the wealthiest countries in the world and yet we have foodbanks.”

There is a back door here where the food is dropped off. Everything is weighed as it comes in, and the name of the donor and the amount of food are entered into a book.

Then it is sorted, first by date and then by type. I pile in, helping the half-dozen others take the newly-delivered food out of its crates and put

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never need to use a foodbank?

it in order on the central table. "We always run out of vegetables and milk," says Jackie Sandford, one of the directors, who is in charge of the volunteers.

"We always have baked beans and soup. Sometimes people bring nappies or loo rolls, which can all be used.

"The worst thing I ever saw was an out-of-date Oxo cube," adds volunteer Peter Ashworth. "They don't go out of date for 10 years!"

Those making donations are asked to bring non-perishable food, although the bank will take fresh food (but not homemade food) if it can be given away the same day.

Toiletries can also be donated – while I am there the Givaudan factory delivers three boxes of toothpaste, washing powder and other household goods.

This is something else I had not thought about: that if you cannot afford to feed your family, then that is only the tip of the iceberg. You also cannot afford to keep your children clean, or wash their clothes, or shampoo their hair; you cannot buy nappies for your baby, or toothpaste, or soap, or deodorant, or any of the other things that the rest of us take for granted.

"I get so bored of people saying they are all spongers," says Mrs Sandford, who also runs cookery classes with Sure Start.

"You only have to listen to some of the stories to know that they are not. Even if you are working, the minimum wage is so different from the living wage. By the time you have paid all your bills and everything else, food is at the bottom of the pile.

"Plus they have stopped teaching cookery at school, so people don't know how to cook because they haven't been taught. Putting that back on the curriculum will make a massive difference.

"It is a huge thing to admit that you can't feed your family. It's great that the help is here, but it is awful to be in that situation and not know where to turn. Those of us who are not facing that are just so lucky."

I sort dozens of tins, jars, packets and boxes of every condiment imaginable. Soup, tinned vegetables, tinned fruit, pasta, rice, coffee, tea, biscuits, sauces, rice pudding, sugar, jam, custard and noodles pass through my hands.

As I look for the best-before dates, often surprisingly elusive, I wonder about the people who have donated them. Maybe they are well off but conscious that others are not. Or maybe they don't have much – maybe they really don't have very much at all, but know there is always someone worse off than themselves.

Mr Ashworth has told me that the

“ Even if working, the minimum wage is so different from the living wage. By the time you have paid all your bills, food is at the bottom of the pile ”

Jackie Sandford,
Ashford foodbank volunteer

poorest people always give the most and I wonder how many of the donations come from people who know they could one day end up needing the foodbank themselves, or have indeed already been there.

"It's not that people can't manage," volunteer Lorna Murray, 66, tells me.

"Maybe they have lost their jobs and not got their benefits for six weeks. It's people in crisis who are experiencing things like ill-health.

"It's hard for people to come in. Sometimes they come in in tears. We don't get many elderly people and I wonder if that is because they are too embarrassed to ask.

"People are very grateful. Sometimes we get thank-you letters."

Hampers are made up as and when people come in, according to their

need. The volunteers work from a prescribed list, which differs according to the size of the family the pack is for.

The food with the shortest use-by dates is handed out first. Food past its best-before date isn't included in the hampers but is left out so people can take it if they want.

I watch Mrs Murray as she works from the list, adding in extras like chocolate and biscuits if they are available, particularly if the hamper is for a family.

The hampers are weighed, again, before they are taken into the waiting room and handed over, usually to the family in question, sometimes to a social-worker.

"The amount of people coming here has increased since I started and sometimes it is non-stop," Mrs Murray tells me.

"Sometimes people give us toys at Christmas, or extras like nuts. One year we actually wrapped them up. At Easter people are so grateful if we can put in Easter eggs – the children wouldn't have got one otherwise."

The bank receives regular donations from Tesco, which has a collection point for customers in its Crookfoot store in Willesborough, and estimates it has supplied 652 meals this year.

The store tops up whatever is do-

nated with cash, so that if supplies run low the volunteers can replenish them.

"We deliver every week or every fortnight. Every two weeks the collection point is over-full," says Elizabeth Bourne, the store's community champion.

"People are so generous. They will come with big bags of food. Everyone knows someone who has been to the foodbank, and some people say it has helped them personally.

"I think people need to realise the foodbank is something that is needed. It shouldn't be, but it is. And you don't want to be in the position where there's not going to be someone who will help you."

I think of the report I read in February, the one that said that we are all, if we lose our jobs, on average, only 11 days away from the breadline.

I wonder if any of us can comfortably say that it will never happen to us. That we wouldn't end up in that situation, and that if we did we are sure we would manage, we would find work or we would stretch our meagre benefits to cover everything we needed.

As a writer who has been made redundant twice in her 10-year career, I know that I, for one, can't say that.

What do you think? Enter the debate. Share your views. Write to: The Editor, KoS, Apple Barn, Hythe Road, Smeeth, Ashford TN25 6SS. Or email editorial@kosmedia.co.uk.

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Bible's power to tell a good story returns with Noah...

At this Easter period, **Dr Chris Deacy**, reader in theology and religious studies at the University of Kent, takes a look at big and small screen adaptations of Bible stories and our approach to them

THE release of Darren Aronofsky's biopic of Noah has engendered a range of discussions in the media in recent weeks.

What is interesting is the debates which surround these remakes of Biblical epics continue with some consistency.

Recent responses relating to this film version of Noah have tended to be quite literalistic, in taking ancient sources at face value.

This can be seen when a recent article for the BBC examined whether Noah might have been an albino, in the light of a passage in the Dead Sea Scrolls which refers to how, as a child, Noah's flesh "was white as snow".

Similarly, back in January, one of the stories leading the news consisted of a Ukup councillor from Oxfordshire who blamed the recent floods on the Government's decision to legalise homosexual marriage.

Likewise, the film Noah has also been attacked for straying too far from the Biblical text and for contradicting the teachings of Islam.

Aronofsky's film brings us back to the agenda issues of historicity versus mythology.

Other films focus on Jesus, and the fact there are so many different presentations of him on offer – from the pietistic and reverential approach to Jesus in *The Greatest Story Ever Told* (1965) to the schizophrenic and neurotic Jesus of Martin Scorsese's *The Last Temptation of Christ* (1988) – highlighting that when it comes to Biblical characters the way they are presented says rather more about the theological proclivities of the director, than it does about reconstructing the historical Jesus per se.

Moreover, when it comes to Jesus, we know very little from the Bible about his day-to-day life and one of the most influential 20th century New Testament critics, Rudolf Bultmann, argued nearly a 100 years ago that it was simply not possible to reconstruct a historical portrait of the historical Jesus.

This is because, for him, the New Testament is so much the work of the

faith tradition of the early Christian community that we can learn relatively little from it regarding the historical life and teaching of Jesus Christ.

"I do indeed think that we can now know almost nothing concerning the life and personality of Jesus, since the early Christian sources show no interest in either," said Bultmann.

Rather, it was the early Christians who moulded the Christ of faith due to the impact the resurrected Jesus had on their lives and the words ascribed to Jesus in the Bible should not be seen as verbatim what Jesus himself actually uttered.

According to the Canadian Biblical scholar Adele Reinhartz "the varieties of Jesus on the silver screen testify to the conviction that Jesus remains relevant to our society as well as to the ongoing need to tell and retell this story, in Hollywood and in other international cinematic centres, in which commercial films are made".

The ongoing debates around Noah seem very similar.

Just as Jesus has been played by an American (in Scorsese's film he speaks in a New York vernacular), a Scandinavian (Max von Sydow in *Greatest Story*), a Spaniard (Enrique Irazoqui in Pasolini's 1964 *The Gospel According to St Matthew*, who was not even a professional actor) and an Englishman (Robert Powell in the 1977 TV series *Jesus of Nazareth*), so we have an Australian, Russell Crowe, playing Noah.

Perhaps Reinhartz is right when she cautioned that "we must not forget that these movies reflect the dependence of Jesus of Hollywood upon the entertainment industry".

So, with Noah, the film will continue to dazzle, excite, provoke, challenge and even educate audiences – but any film about a 600-year-old patriarch (Russell Crowe certainly makes him look youthful) should never be seen as an accurate or definitive rendering of the Biblical story, and it is all the more creative and inspiring for that.



Picture: PARAMOUNT PICTURES CORPORATION AND REGENCY ENTERTAINMENT

Blockbuster that's been making waves

THE latest retelling of a classic Bible story this Easter appears at our cinemas in the form of Noah.

Directed by Darren Aronofsky, this \$130 million epic runs well over two hours long and has a star-studded cast, spearheaded by Russell Crowe as Noah himself.

Crowe has made something of a name for himself with historic roles – going back to the Roman times for

Gladiator and the French Revolution for his role in *Les Misérables*.

Also appearing are Harry Potter star Emma Watson, Jennifer Connelly, Ray Winstone and Sir Anthony Hopkins.

Unsurprisingly, it has not been without critics who claim too much artistic licence. But then isn't that always the way when using a divine text to entertain the masses?

The story is familiar to many. As an angry Old Testament God sends a mighty flood to rid the world of sinners, he gives instructions to one man – Noah – to save some of his creations by building a mighty ark and to gather pairs of animals who could survive the flood and start afresh when the waters subside.

Reviews of the film have been generally good.

While movie-goers flock to see Noah, the Bible has certainly spawned a host of big budget spin-offs on stage and screen. And perhaps little wonder. Because when the creative process gets it right, it appears we have a huge appetite for them. We take a look at some of the most memorable...

The Ten Commandments Film

Release: 1956

CECIL B DeMille's sumptuous 1956 classic remains perhaps the reference point for all other films deriving from the Bible.

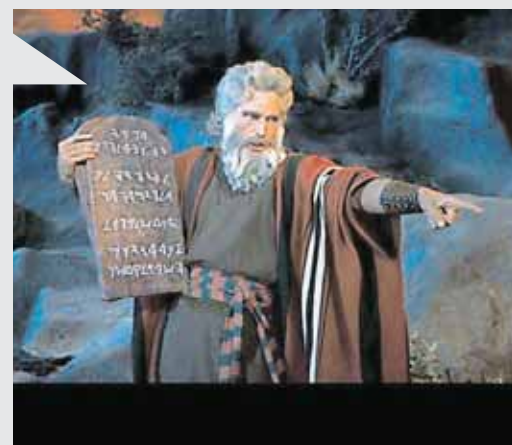
Starring Charlton Heston, pictured right, and Yul Brynner, it is epic in all proportions.

With a running time of more than three-and-a-half hours, it is certainly one you need to set some quality time aside to watch.

The most costly film to make at the time, it features some of the biggest movie sets ever seen.

But for all the investment, it delivered at the box office, proving a huge hit and becoming the biggest grossing film of the year.

With adjustments for inflation, today it has taken the equivalent of \$2 billion at the box office and is the seventh highest grossing movie of all time.



Film

Release: 2004

MEL Gibson's career has certainly been something of a roller-coaster ride.

Known to a generation as one of the big screen idols, with roles in films such as *Mad Max* and the *Lethal Weapon* series, his decision to direct *The Passion of the Christ* certainly divided audiences.

It focuses on the last 12 hours of Jesus' life and is a bloody and brutal retelling of his story. The dialogue is entirely in Aramaic and Latin with subtitles and sparked controversy over allegations of anti-Semitism.

It was, however, a commercial success making \$600 million and is the highest grossing non-English language movie of all time. Not one, however, for the faint-hearted.



Prince of Egypt

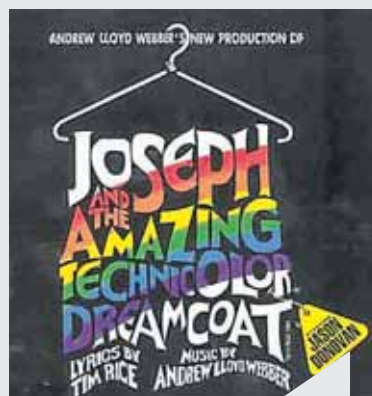
Animated film

Release: 1998

DREAMWORKS dipped its toe into the Bible for this animated movie which became the top-grossing non-Disney animated movie by the turn of the century.

It is an adaptation of the Book of Exodus which follows the fortunes of Moses, from his birth, youth and how he led the enslaved Israelites out of Egypt.

It would eventually bring in more than \$216.5 million at the box office.



Joseph & The Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat

Musical

Release: Various from 1968

THE first musical to be performed from the hit machine of Andrew Lloyd Webber and Tim Rice, the story is based around the tale of Joseph and his coat of many colours, as it appears in the Book of Genesis.

However, it was not until the pair had seen Jesus Christ Superstar become a huge hit, that it was revived and turned into a global sensation.

A huge family favourite it has enjoyed a number of revivals – perhaps most notably in 1991 when heart-throb actor Jason Donovan and TV presenter Philip Schofield took over the lead role, introducing it to a younger audience.



Jesus of Nazareth

Television drama

Release: 1977

FOR many people, watching Robert Powell appear alongside Jasper Carrott in BBC TV comedy *The Detectives* was almost sacrilegious. Because the TV actor will probably forever be known for his portrayal of Jesus in TV drama *Jesus of Nazareth*.

For anyone who grew up in the 1970s and 80s, it was almost impossible to avoid as it would appear on the TV schedules frequently around Easter.

Hugely popular, even the Pope gave it his blessing, it has gone on to become one of the most commercially successful TV drama on Christ ever made, generating tens of millions of pounds in profits.

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LYN 34yrs, pretty petite dark haired female, loves music, meals out, quiet drinks out, seeking caring male with GSOH who can make me feel special again. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 410137

CAROLINE blonde curvy very active lady who loves to socialise, countryside, seeking similar caring male for LTR and to share good times with. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 409413

ANNA, busy mature lady seeks no strings discreet meetings with male any age or location. Tel No: 0905 002 1956 Box 366019

RACHEL 39, brown hair/eyes, 5ft 6ins, bubbly, outgoing, naughty, busy, divorced, seeks male for discreet fun times. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 410835

SUE optimistic divorced lady with OHAC, good job, enjoys meals out, cinema, countryside, pub lunches, looking for likeminded outgoing happy male. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 410467

CHRISTINA, curvy beauty, 27yrs, own home, very very adventurous seeks no strings fun and frolics. Can accommodate and will answer all calls. Tel No: 0905 002 1957 Box 410127

CATHY very much a lady seeks get up to 62yrs who would appreciate an independent professional sassy female who loves to be wined, dined and romanced. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 410301

WOULD you like to bounce into Spring with me and onwards? Widow late 60's, enjoy most things in life, looking for someone to enjoy them with. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 411395

SARAH, married lady seeks discreet no strings fun with gent. ACA. Tel No: 0905 002 1961 Box 408291

LADY 60, size 12, easy going, likes animals, seeks male for friendship, maybe more. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 411301

VANESSA 32yrs single mum, honest, loving, kind hearted, been hurt in the past enjoys music, reading etc, WLTm my very special Mr Right. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 409899

SUSAN seeking nice male, medium build, 35, easygoing, likes music, nights in. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 406779

SAM, 35yrs, own business, sexy, loves dressing up and married, seeks discreet man for casual meetings. Can travel anywhere. ACA. Tel No: 0905 002 1949 Box 408297

MARIE 37yrs slim attractive caring, likes meals in/out, cinema, tennis, keeping fit/active, WLTm fun loving, reliable man for friendship leading to more. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 411037

SOPHIE 27yr old nursing assistant with no ties looking for discreet adult fun times with tall attractive guy 35-42yrs. GSOH essential. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 410717

34YR single mum of 1 who loves nights out having a good time seeks similar sociable fun guy to enjoy relaxed but extremely fun relationship. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 410709

BUSTY Caribbean lady who loves music, dance and singing, looking for nice older guy for mutual adult no strings fun times. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 410305

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RACHAEL 36yr old nurse looking to raise the temperature of reliable sincere male. I have my OHAC, a single mum to 1, love gym, cosy meals, animals etc. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 411045

SUSAN 29 green eyes, dark hair, slim, looking for Mr tall dark and handsome to take me out, enjoy adult times without complications just fun. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 410957

KAREN blonde blue eyed slim 35yr old interesting female looking for good times, call me if I am in a similar situation, board and looking for some fun. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 410719

JANE pretty size 12, loves going out socialising, countryside, meals out, looking for no strings fun, nothing heavy, give me a call if you are seeking similar. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 410579

SUE 32 blonde blue eyed curvy nurse, caring, loving romantic, faithful, likes cosy nights in with a nice wine and lovely man, if that's you, call me. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 410571

JANE tall leggy blonde size 12, nice/eyes, likes yoga, swimming, meals in/out, etc. WLTm nice tall male/dad with similar interests to spend time with. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 410487

WOULD you like to be my Valentine? Widow 68, seeking Valentine 68-70, likes most things, would like to share them with someone. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 410695

BLONDE pretty, long legged, voluptuous, blue eyes, seeks male. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 410585

LAURA happy size 12-14, attractive, loves shopping, gym, music, clubbing, eating in/out, looking for sincere honest male looking for more than just good fun. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 410713

KATIE 21yr old very attractive female who is up for most things, looking for daytime fun, no strings and discreet pls. Age/stature unimportant. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 410573

JEWISH widow, 67, loves animals, seeks genuine, Jewish gent, 68-73 for friendship, maybe more. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 410547

DAWN 38 dark hair/eyes medium built busty female who loves nights in/out, WLTm fun honest male/single dad with GSOH to help mend my broken heart. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 410483

TERRI 44 green eyed long legged busty blonde, loves to dress up and look feminine, seeking loving, fun, honest professional to fall head over her heels with. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 410315

SUE attractive, likes walks, gardening, social drinks, looking for male to settle down with, 60's. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 410231

68YR old widow, seeking 68-70yr old gent, likes meals out, cosy nights in, lets start New Year with new outlook. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 409467

CATHY happy independent female looking for her soul mate, someone to spend quality time but who also likes their own space. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 409008

MARIE slim attractive fun brunette, looking for good times with exciting broadminded male. Status unimportant. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 409707

REBECCA kind, caring, honest, ally, seeking older gent to wine and dine me. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 402273

59YR old Kent lady, bubbly, large build, dog lover, easygoing, GSOH, seeks male. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 403071

CLAIRE young 39 slim size 10, pretty, outgoing, seeks similar spontaneous male for nights in/out and fun times. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 409417

SUE young at heart female, very adventurous and looking for no strings fun with mature man. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 409251

JAN 38yr old attractive lonely female looking for uncomplicated fun times only. Status unimportant. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 409107

ANGIE 32 curvy size 16, very attractive, good company and really fun to be with. What are you waiting for? Call me. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 409255

SARAH pretty petite green eyed female, lots of fun, likes children, animals, gym, eating out, running, sports, fast cars, shopping, seeking, nice guy to spend time with. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 408879

BLONDE female, 5ft 1ins, size 12, likes meals out, drinks, nights in, walks, seeks male. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 409025

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CHIPS on the pier, walks on the beach/countryside, VGSOH, 58yrs old, fit male, seeks female for laughs and love and whatever. NE Kent. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 411725

MALE 71, 5ft 10ins, medium build, N/S, likes gardening, dogs, seeks female, 65-71 for friendship/companionship and outings. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 411587

MALE 5ft 11ins, good-looking, athletic build, looking for discreet fun times. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 411477

DEREK seeking female, 50-60 for company, friendship and have fun together. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 411433

MALE 49, attractive, fit, spontaneous, good company, no ties, seeking likeminded lady for the road ahead, nights in and out. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 411309

RAY 63, 5ft 10ins, slim, semi-retired, seeking no strings discreet meets for adult fun. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 411147

WORLD war veteran seeking happy lady with nice conversation in the Kent area. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 411133

41YR old male, dark hair, 5ft 11ins, easy going, likes music, guitar, seeking female for friendship, maybe more. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 410411

PAUL own business, looking for daytime fun with lady. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 411127

DAVE 65, retired, N/S, likes gardening, music, meals out, holidays, seeks female. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 410971

DAVE 62, 5ft 10ins, slim, semi-retired builder, seeks no strings discreet daytime meets for adult fun. Surrey. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 410899

MALE likes outdoor life, smoker, seeking local female for cosy nights in. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 410755

BRIAN 70, Maidstone, seeking female, 60 plus, likes meals out, cinema, theatre, days out and cosy nights in. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 410611

DEREK 5ft 11ins, slim-medium build, loving, caring, seeking black lady for possible relationship. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 410511

EARLY 50's single male, smoker, seeking likeminded female for company and to share life. Must have GSOH, like animals, walks, home made food and nights in. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 410441

BROWN eyed white mature, handsome male, seeking black female, 18-50 for discreet no strings adult fun. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 410377

STEVE 6ft 4ins, OHAC, seeking relationship, outdoor type, homely, wanting mutual good relationship with sexy woman. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 407835

PHIL 6ft, clean shaven, blue eyes, smart, likes sports, walks, films, theatre, music, animals, GSOH, seeks female, 40-55 for fun and friendship, maybe more. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 410351

RETIRED male, fit, active, seeks no strings discreet meet with female, any age and size. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 410343

ADVENTUROUS male, mid 50's, seeks similar lady for fun and mutually enjoyable discreet relationship. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 410339

CHRIS widower likes DIY, gardening, nights out, rock and roll, N/S, looking for LTR with female. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 410191

ATTRACTIVE white gent, 48, 56th, romantic, easy going, GSOH, seeking young lady, 60-75 for quality discreet fun times. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 410025

DIVORCED male, seeks Oriental lady, likes animals, music, will take care of you forever. Thanet area, willing to travel. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 409963

PROFESSIONAL male, early 40's, fun loving, OHAC, seeks warm, sincere female for LTR. Animals/children welcome. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 409961

CANTERBURY mature male, medium build, GSOH, varied interests, sign language interpreter, seeks slim-medium build female, 24-42 for LTR. Single mum welcome. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 405697

PROFESSIONAL male, early 40's, fun loving, independent, OHAC, seeks warm, sincere, fun loving female for LTR. Animals/children welcome. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 409745

RETIRED male, seeks no strings discreet meets with slim-medium build female, any age for adult fun. Midway area. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 408343

RETIRED male, 66, 6ft 2ins, easy going, GSOH, loyal, loves pets, meals out, life, seeks lady for LTR. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 407317

MALE 67, professional, fit, 5ft 10ins, medium build, reliable, tactile, likes most things, seeks slim lady, let's go! Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 407855

ANTHONY 48, athletic, enjoys country walks, seeks youthful female for friendship/relationship. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 407355

71YR old romantic, 6ft, likes life, socialising, reading, strong tea, dogs, smoker but house trained seeks mature lady needing TLC. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 407277



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DAVE 50, likes holidays, meals out, socialising, easy going, seeks female 40 plus. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 408541

ADAM 48, single dad, bored, seeking fun and more. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 408421

DAVE 50, seeks female of similar age for meals out, holidays etc. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 408415

RETIRED male, seeks no strings discreet meets with slim-medium build female, any age for adult fun. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 408343

RETIRED male, 66, 6ft 2ins, easy going, GSOH, loyal, loves pets, meals out, life, seeks lady for LTR. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 407317

MALE 67, professional, fit, 5ft 10ins, medium build, reliable, tactile, likes most things, seeks slim lady, let's go! Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 407855

ANTHONY 48, athletic, enjoys country walks, seeks youthful female for friendship/relationship. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 407355

71YR old romantic, 6ft, likes life, socialising, reading, strong tea, dogs, smoker but house trained seeks mature lady needing TLC. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 407277

BLACK male, looking for 1-2-1 relationship with laid back, understanding female. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 406221

YOUNG 70 widower, fit, lonely, 5ft 11ins, 11st, likes drives, walks, DIY, meals out, gardening, smoker, looking for lady to spend life with. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 405519

DAVE genuine guy, 6ft, black hair, blue eyes, medium build, likes sports, gardening, music, seeks female with GSOH and genuine. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 388372

RETIRED male 68, 5ft 8ins, considerate, GSOH, easygoing, likes driving, shopping, most music, seeking lady 60-70 for friendship. Ashford. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 404589

DOG lover short of British slim petite lady to maybe get into 1-2-1 relationship and start something new. Smoker welcome, age immaterial. Tunbridge Wells area. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 404417

TALL friendly, very light hearted, single 58, seeks pretty woman for LTR, mutual selection of activities and choosing how to spend our time. Croydon. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 407147

BLACK male, looking for 1-2-1 relationship with laid back, understanding female. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 406221

YOUNG 70 widower, fit, lonely, 5ft 11ins, 11st, likes drives, walks, DIY, meals out, gardening, smoker, looking for lady to spend life with. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 405519

DAVE genuine guy, 6ft, black hair, blue eyes, medium build, likes sports, gardening, music, seeks female with GSOH and genuine. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 388372

RETIRED male 68, 5ft 8ins, considerate, GSOH, easygoing, likes driving, shopping, most music, seeking lady 60-70 for friendship. Ashford. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 404589

DOG lover short of British slim petite lady to maybe get into 1-2-1 relationship and start something new. Smoker welcome, age immaterial. Tunbridge Wells area. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 404417

TALL slim male, early 40's, seeks loving female, 29-39 to share the nice things in life. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 407065

PROFESSIONAL 45yr old male, one son, bored of the same thing, seeks lady for possible romance. Kent. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 386234

CHRIS 68, 5ft 9ins, 13st, frustrated widower, likes country/western music, real ale, gardening, cruises, looking for companionship. Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 402271

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CATCHING THEM EARLY: Children as young as seven from The Marlowe's drama groups were among more than 150 performers taking part

We live in the Garden, so what does it mean to us?

FEW counties have suffered more at the claws of urbanisation over recent decades than Kent. Such has been the onslaught of housing estates, roads, business parks and industrial development that its moniker The Garden of England can at times seem wholly inappropriate.

But it's a term that sticks, even if we're perhaps most likely to see it as part of some PR spiel promoting yet another assault of bricks and mortar taking away the very thing being used as one of the county's main selling points.

So quite what the term means, if anything, to those who live and grow up here might be difficult to fathom.

Lest you don't know, we can thank (or otherwise) King Henry VIII for Kent being bestowed with the title of the Garden of England, his ordered planting of the first cherry and apple orchards, at Teynham, near Sittingbourne, changing the way the county would be perceived for centuries to come.

And now that perception has been scrutinised in a project culminating in an impressively large community production spanning four days and involving more than 150 performers at Canterbury's Marlowe Theatre.

The Garden of England was directed by Andrew Dawson, creative projects officer at the theatre. Lasting some three hours, it entailed a series of outdoor

The Marlowe's community play saw more than 150 actors tell of the many comings and goings over hundreds of years that have produced the Kent we know today, writes **David Mairs**

sketches performed primarily by members of Marlowe's drama groups with seemingly no age group left out.

At which point it should be clarified that The Garden of England has – with the exception of a sketch in a garden created at The Marlowe Lab by students at Hadlow College – precious little to do with the county's fruit-farming tradition.

Rather, it concerns people, particularly their movement in and out of the county. Immigration, exploitation, persecution and perception all feature large.

The 13th-century expulsion of the Jews, the arrival of the Huguenots from France some 400 years later and the modern-day issue of refugees are all covered; young children play out folk tales by a gypsy caravan at the front of the theatre; and the whole thing winds up in The Marlowe Studio with Dawson's play Heaven's Witness.

Performed by The Marlowe Ensemble, it relates the intertwined stories of a family who move to Kent from London in 1912 to escape a troubled history and, in

1574, that of the Marlowes, with son Christopher going in the opposite direction, to the capital, where his life is cut wickedly short.

Dawson explained what he was trying to do with The Garden of England: "It's an idea that we decided upon as way of exploring Kentish identity. I was looking for something exclusive and large – 200 people come to Marlowe workshops and it's difficult to draw

“Looking at identity and community... allowed us to explore different aspects of being Kentish”

in all those people.

"Looking at identity and community seemed a really good idea – it allowed us to explore different aspects of being Kentish. There's the county's agricultural abundance and the term Garden of England gives a sense of paradise, almost a Garden of Eden. We were asking if it is as idyllic as the name

suggests."

The production was clearly no small challenge – surely he didn't write all of it?

"I wrote the studio play and some of the bits around the route. We used some additional material and Martin Gibbons from the focus group did some writing.

"Some of Marlowe's words are in there and there are works from traditional poets as well as ideas picked up in and around Kent – there are different and disparate ideas, all of them linked."

With such a big project, resources were stretched. "It was really a very small team to do something like this," he said.

"We had just two permanent members of staff on it and the producer, Katherine Igoe-Ewer, was brilliant."

There were many voluntary hands set to the task, though, with involvement from good folk at Canterbury Christ Church University and Hadlow College.

It was Hadlow students who created the garden at The Marlowe Lab, transforming a bleak and unlovely yard into a place of genuine attraction that will last way beyond the duration of the project.

"We've a lot of staff over there, so we wanted to create a nicer environment – the more we get involved in, the more we need usable outdoor space," said Dawson.

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» Features team

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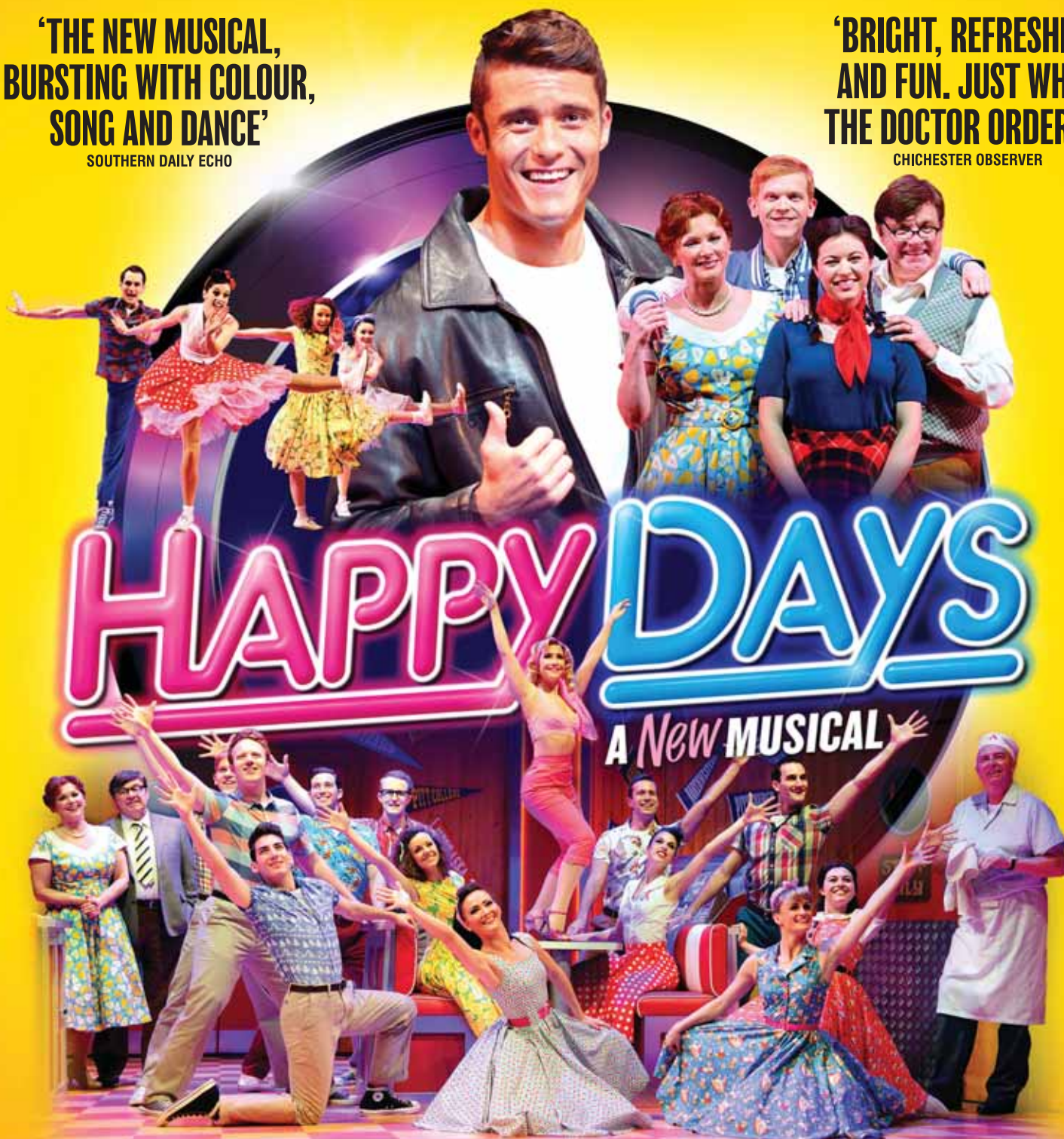
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ALL THE COUNTY'S A STAGE: Left, Chris Smith (centre) and Sinclair Perry (right) played John and Kit Marlowe. Right, youngsters played out a variety of Kentish folk tales in front of the theatre.

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Of the theatre's six drama groups or companies, it was only the Diddies (two- to four-year-olds) and Minis (five- to seven-year-olds) who were not asked to participate – there had, after all, to be some limits to stop it all spiralling out of control.

Other than that, though, it was Junior Company upwards, bringing in an age range of seven to 77.

And, in the true sense of community theatre, groups as diverse as Kent Refugee Action Network (some of the actors were refugees), the police and museums all contributed.

So, as well as being an ambitious work involving a broad span of people and organisations, and of course the public, was this a production that was essentially selling a message?

"It's not for me to communicate a singular message," said Dawson. "Rather, it was to help people understand from an informed perspective. It wasn't created from a staunch ideological point of view, but I hope it provoked discussion."

"Newcomers are often regarded with suspicion from all angles and it's often just born out of ignorance or fear."

As for the sheer logistics of the production, you suspected that potentially the most awkward logistics were getting the audience in from outside to the studio for the play, however smoothly it was achieved.

"All the transitions were challenging to achieve," said Dawson. "But once you've got everyone into one place, it's fine. Even so, it's immersive theatre and people can act in quite unpredictable ways, so getting people inside and watching the show was a challenge."

What many of those people might not have known was that John

Marlowe was played by Chris Smith, the landlord of The Canterbury Tales just over the road from the theatre.

A novice at the game, his acting was one of the highlights of Heaven's Witness, even allowing for "a bit of a wobble" with his lines in the final performance of the run.

"It was the first time I'd done any of this, even at school, so it was a nice escape for me to do something I'd never done before. I had some mental ups and downs doing it, especially for the last show, which you really want to do well in, but even that added to my experience."

"Most of them had their scripts by

Christmas, but I knew nothing of it until early March. It was Saturday night and I'd probably had a glass of wine too many when Andy [Dawson] asked me if I'd like to step in and replace someone who had dropped out.

"The following day I'd had a sleep on it and thought 'Yes, this is a challenge and I'm always up for a challenge', so I thought I'd give it a go."

"I had no idea of the amount of work that goes into it, especially the rehearsals. We'd be in my pub hour

Continued on page 46 »

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« Continued from page 45

after hour going through the lines. Of course, it's not only learning the lines – you've got to know where you are on set and get your interaction right with the other guys. You've got to do a bit of acting as well.

"You could say I'm on stage every night in the pub, I suppose, but I enjoyed it so much I'd certainly never say never if the opportunity came up again.

"I've had so much fun with so many new friends all within the local community. It was a wonderful experience and I'd recommend it to anyone except those of a nervous disposition – it's scary up there.

"I've seen how much how hard work goes into it and hats off to Andy and his production team – it's a long time since I've seen so many people pulling together for the enjoyment of others.

"This has lifted my faith in teamwork, in youngsters, in the not-so-young and in the community and has opened my eyes to the value of what we are so lucky to have with The Marlowe Theatre right on our doorstep."

At the other end of the spectrum is Sinclair Perry, the 11-year-old Barton Court pupil who played John Marlowe's son, Kit.

For him, acting might just be in the blood. He is a member of The Marlowe Apprentice Company, which, he says, is "more about putting into practice than teaching", while he has done "lots of acting at school".

Even so, he accepts that this was his biggest challenge to date, "unless you count school productions as big".



COMING IN? The tribulations of the Huguenots, above, and, years on, Tarquin Taylor, right, sets a citizenship test

"It taught me a lot about how committed you've got to be and also how it's just about having fun. It was also 'Wow!'. It was such a big project and Andy had so much work to do –

“We're always looking for different ways of showing what we do. I'm hoping for a production every year.”

it was only when it all came together that you realised," he said.

Aside from the acting experience, what did he take from what The Garden of England had to say?

"I didn't see it as giving a message. It was teaching a story that you don't want to land yourself in those places that my older self [Marlowe] found himself in and got in trouble."

As for his future on stage, this young man is setting his sights high.

"I'll just wait and see what there is – if there's anything good. I've done lots of acting at school and there's an acting club in the village. I took part



in a variety show and was involved in the singing and acting, but I didn't do the dancing.

"I want to be the Doctor [Who] – I'm a mega fan."

The Garden of England, then, hit the spot. So what next for Dawson and his assembled talents?

"We're always looking for new and different ways of showing what we do. I'm hoping for one production every year – we reach so many people and learn all sorts of things.

"We need to make sure we have the right infrastructure and support in the organisation.

This was delivered with a lot of love from a lot of people – it was important to us as our community production that it was a success.

"It did a pretty good job of making its money back through ticket sales and footfall in the theatre."

Job done and, if you were lucky enough to see the excitement of so many people – whether young or old – you just might be putting your-self forward next time round.

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Organisers pleased to greet you at spectacular events

THE organisers of The War and Peace Revival and Folkestone Airshow have teamed up with Kent Greeters to welcome visitors to their events this year. The Greeters, volunteers of all ages, are members of a scheme managed by Visit Kent to help visitors to the county make the most of their time here.

Folkestone Airshow project manager Yvonne Holder said at least 100,000 people were expected to watch events in the sky and to visit displays, exhibitions, refreshment stalls and family activities on The Leas and in the harbour area during the weekend of June 7-8.

"We want everyone to have a good time – and that includes a smile and friendly greeting when they need information or assistance," she said.

"That's why we have enlisted 20 Kent Greeters to work alongside our other volunteers such as RAF Air Cadets, Kent Marine Cadet Force, Sea Cadets, Kent Army Cadet Force and Kent Scouts.

"Their distinctive uniform [dual-branded lilac polo shirts and navy-blue trousers] will make them instantly recognisable.

"Among their duties will be welcoming people arriving at the town's railway stations, bus station



TANKS A LOT: Kent Greeters will be on hand at The War and Peace Revival

and car and coach parks, directing them to viewing points and ground display locations and generally helping them enjoy their visit to Folkestone."

Rex Cadman, organiser of The War and Peace Revival, said: "Following the move to our new, bigger, venue at Folkestone Racecourse last year, we decided we needed more people to meet and greet and help visitors find their way around the show.

"It's a huge venue with so much to

see that we want visitors to be able to enjoy as much of The War and Peace Revival as possible during their visit.

"The Kent Greeters will be a fantastic addition to our team as they are each trained in customer service, ensuring visitors receive the welcome and service we all expect as a visitor to The War and Peace Revival."

■ **For more on The War and Peace Revival 2014, visit www.thewarandpeacerevival.co.uk.**

Experience the thrill of the karting chase at Buckmore

KARTING for youngsters aged four to 15 at Buckmore Park has just got a lot more exciting.

For fun that is fast and furious during this half-term holiday, you cannot beat karting.

To experience the real thrill of the sport, head for Chatham's award-winning outdoor Buckmore Park Kart Circuit, where Formula 1 world champions Lewis Hamilton and Jenson Button learnt their karting skills.

The circuit is just off junction 3 of the M2.

The popular venue has opened a new circuit just in time for the Easter holidays.

The new Paddock Circuit is designed to offer adrenaline-pumping turn-up-and-drive karting for all ages from eight to adult.

The circuit has a fast straight, a

tight hairpin and changes in gradient, so it's sure to sort the racers from the also-rans.

While the older children are enjoying the Paddock Circuit, those aged four to seven can enjoy driving electric karts on the 120-metre Kids Mini GP Circuit.

As with the Paddock Circuit, the Kids Mini GP track will be open most days across the Easter holiday, but do check for details.

On certain days the main Club and International circuits will also be available to eight- to 11-year-olds, 12- to 15-year-olds and even adults on the special Family Day on the Monday, April 21.

Karting sessions start from £15.

Visit www.buckmore4kids.co.uk for full details, or you can phone 01634 661617 or email sales@buckmore.co.uk.



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KENT LIFE



SHINE ON: The two events comprising the festival are strong enough to cope with the weather's worst, but sunshine is of course always welcome...

Eat, drink, be merry and raise funds for a festival

ON Tuesday of this week some 60 people tucked into the Garden of Kent Supper at East Kent College in Broadstairs. Blessed they were, without question, but this was not simply a knees-up for hungry food-lovers.

Delightful though it was for those fortunate enough to attend, there was purpose behind it all – to raise money for this year's Broadstairs Food Festival.

It's a culinary jamboree that comes in two parts – the Spring Fair and the October Festival – and it is developing into a highlight of the local events calendar.

It does, though, need funding. Jo Scott, festival director, set the scene for the Garden of Kent Supper: "The college restaurant holds 80 or so and we had about 60 here. The whole idea of it, apart from people having a good time, is to raise money for the festival.

"There is another, similar, event in the autumn. Curiously, whereas the autumn one gets filled quite easily, the spring meal tends to be a bit down on numbers – perhaps because it's in the Easter holidays.

David Mairs joins happy eaters at an event helping to secure the already bright future of a culinary showpiece

"The numbers certainly weren't disastrous, but it's something that we may have to look at."

Tickets for the Garden of Kent Supper were priced at £30 – a snip in anyone's language when you consider that included five courses of heavenly food and the chance, it

“We want to pull the producers' geographical area nearer and nearer while spreading the audience further”

should not be forgotten, to win prizes in a raffle.

However, it was only when the price was reduced that a number of businesses bought in to the evening. Perhaps they don't all

appreciate the worth of the festival to Broadstairs.

Perhaps the same might even be said of the town council, which makes a contribution, although nowhere near enough to bridge a considerable shortfall in funds.

"The spring event is held in Pierremont Park and helps sustain trade at top of the town," said Scott. "Last year a gate check showed about 12,000 at the spring event and 50,000 in the autumn."

Scott does not mince her words when stressing the importance of keeping things as local as possible.

"The spring festival replaces the Continental market that used to be here. That consisted of out-of-towners coming in and contributing nothing to the local economy.

"Anyway, in 2012 the Continental market didn't come back and in January 2013 we went

to the town council and said are you having a market back, seeing as you have a wealth of local produce on your doorstep – they agreed and we had 12 weeks to turn it around.

"We were very good and kept to within 2 per cent of our budget. With Easter being early last year there was foul weather, with snow still lying when we put the marquees up on the Friday. It cleared, but there was still a vicious arctic wind on Saturday.

"This year, we're hoping for beautiful weather with blooming flowers and all the rest of it. We've got 56 stalls against last year's 50, all of them local or regional – none from outside Kent.

"We want to pull the producers' geographical area nearer and nearer while spreading the audience further and further."

■ The Spring Fair is at Pierremont Park, Broadstairs, from Saturday to Monday, April 19-21, from 10am to 5pm. Entry is free. On Monday there is an Easter bonnet parade, which you are welcome to enter. For more information, visit www.broadstairsfoodfestival.org.uk.

Away from the madding hype, a strike back for tradition

The Vine

Location: Sevenoaks

By Alan Wypych

S EVENOAKS, it is fair to say, has not been a part of Kent's culinary revolution in the way that the county's coastal towns have over the past decade or so.

In truth, that has been down largely to the fact that the establishment of an increasingly sophisticated food-and-drink sector has comprised a substantial part of the much-trumpeted rebirth of, for example, Whitstable and Margate.

Sevenoaks, of course, needs no such helping hand. Sevenoaks, as we all know, is the posh bit of Kent. And

so it goes on in its quiet, understated manner.

What it has it keeps, and no one seems overly bothered in changing things. Why should they? This is a town that works, in every sense, while those who want, say, a choice of dishes from the four corners of the planet probably work in London anyway. If I sound flippant, it's unintentional, and you get the drift.

The Vine is a Sevenoaks mainstay. Set in a conservation area and opposite England's oldest cricket ground, it has a lot going for it. We visited on a Monday evening. The

place was not wildly busy, but neither was it so bereft of diners that we felt awkward. In short, a nice number.

We were in the restaurant's glass-fronted extension and I had wondered if it might lack a little atmosphere, especially in comparison with the older, more traditional, section.

Any such fears were misplaced. We sat next to said floor-to-ceiling window and savoured the immaculate layout of our surroundings. This is an extension that has been done well.

With unobtrusive and friendly service to match, it left only the small matter of the food to impress.

I chose cock crab, crispy salt cod,

pickled cockles and new-season peas to start. It was grand and perhaps the reason it carried a £2 supplement.

For reasons best known to herself, my companion chose not to have a starter. She looked hungrily over at mine and the temptation to offer her some fluttered briefly but died.

Her time would come and it did in the form of sea bream, potted brown shrimp, white asparagus and new-season wild garlic. She was delighted it with it, her only mild criticism when pushed (reviewers have to do such things) being that it was a touch oily.

It was, coincidentally or otherwise, the only flaw I could muster during the whole evening and it applied to

the dauphinoise potatoes I had as a side dish. In no way enough to spoil it, but worth a mention.

I had pot-roast guineafowl, cured bacon, charred leeks and winter truffle as main. Lovely... end of.

The price is set at £27 for two courses and £32 for three. With apple tart tatin as dessert, a couple of glasses of superb Sauvignon Guy Allion and coffees, the bill pitched up at £91. Not cheap maybe, but neither did we feel cheated. We were, when all said and done, in Sevenoaks.

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Smart roads are anything but!

CONCERNING the M25 hard shoulder running article (KoS, last week), anybody that has driven on what the Highways Agency now calls 'smart motorways' knows the exact opposite is true – they are anything but smart!

Seems 'smart' is another trendy word to add to 'green' or 'sustainable' so beloved by the car-hating fraternity and politicians alike.

Locally, the variable speed limit on the M20 and M25 around Heathrow, being good examples.

All we get is a mish-mash of fluctuating speed limits that bears no relationship to prevailing traffic conditions.

The government is now downgrading vast swaths of motorway speed limits, using 'pollution' as an excuse, these 'smart motorway', speed camera-infested roads, are just the weapon of choice to achieve their aim.

Terry Hudson, Whitstable

Euro vote apathy is not big surprise

I SEE dilettante Dave is talking of 'public apathy' in the Euro elections and repeated in KoS last week. Is it any surprise?

Who generated it? Maybe it was Heath who admitted he lied about a 'Common Market' as he gave away our sovereignty, our fishing rights and much else. On this con alone, we should be given another vote.

Maybe it was the following politicians who lied about treaties being 'tidying up exercises' as they gave more and more control of our country to a foreign power.

Maybe it was the promises to have an EU referendum – I remember at least five that were always broken because it was never 'the right time'.

How dare any of them talk of public apathy when we've been lied to again and again, ignored, sidelined and treated as an irrelevance while MEPs in this gravy train/MPs retirement club, have made themselves millionaires.

Phil Granger, West Malling

Lodge Hill – keep it for the wildlife

WITH reference to the Lodge Hill proposals (KoS 06.04.14), I would recommend the site is kept for wildlife considering it is a Site of Special Scientific Interest.

There is not a need for housing in

LETTER OF THE WEEK



Pothole repair cash spent on new paint?

MOST people don't see what Kent County Council spends our money on except the roads which we see every day, and which must qualify as some of the worst maintained in the country.

We are now into early summer and holes which were created months ago remain untouched except for the white markings painted on to the road to highlight where repairs are needed, and even these are now fading.

One can't help feel the extra millions the government has allocated to Kent is for the paint to renew the original markings.

I'd hate to be on any two-wheel

vehicle on these roads.

KCC claims it is repairing 1,000 holes a week and it has 40 crews on the job but perhaps they have lost their way – as here in west Kent, large holes, sometimes down to the subsoil, have been a threat to driving for months with no sign of even white markings.

Perhaps the public could have some of the white paint and highlight the problems.

The road repair teams could for example fill the holes around the Tubs Lake bends on the A229 which are a hazard to cyclists and all motor vehicles.

John Hunt, via email

Kent with the exception of social housing. If we had control over immigration there would be less of a problem.

The more we develop and concrete over greenfield and wildlife-sensitive sites, the more problems we have with flooding and other environmental problems.

Susanne Stebbing, Herne Bay

Why were houses not built at start?

I STILL cannot understand why Medway Council did not begin building the houses they said they would as soon as the MoD said they didn't need the site anymore?

Seventeen years later, and Mother Nature has take over the site,

culminating in it being designated a site of SSSI.

Rodney Chambers and his deputy complain there's not enough money to cover 'front line' jobs but they wasted over £37m over all of this.

Barbara Morrison, Chatham

MoD site would make large park

CAN it be the 'powers that be' can only see pound signs and not what would really benefit the area, as well as protecting wildlife, with the Lodge Hill proposals?

Here is a wonderful opportunity to create a large park area like Mote Park in Maidstone, a true asset to the towns.

There would be still be parts that

could be developed like North, South and Central Terrace that have been left in ruins after the Army used it and where I use to live in my teens.

There is also housing there that is boarded up. Which begs the question – why build more?

I would suggest we don't need another large developed area. We are already very overcrowded here.

If we are not careful, Kent will be one big sprawling mess. It breaks my heart.

Pat Pilbrow, via email

Who will pocket Manston profit?

IN reply to the letter by Jackie Davidson on the future of Manston Airport, I take issue with parts of her letter.

Taking the question of transport links, I have been travelling to and from Gatwick from Ramsgate for the last 20 years, at least ten times we have missed flights because of accidents on the M25.

On one occasion, we left Gatwick at 5.30pm and we walked through our front door at 12.30am.

On the question of infrastructure, Roger Gale MP stated that if an airline gave a commitment of a number of years, the infrastructure would follow.

Southend has proved that provincial airports are viable, also Lydd Airport is attracting interest and investment.

My cynical view is that if a sale goes through, someone will profit a great deal. RIP Manston.

Gary Smee, Ramsgate

Ukip 'galvanised' British politics

KENT county councillor Mike Eddy's reference to Ukip as the 'UK Isolationist Party' is typical of the comments from those who see no objection in our sovereignty being surrendered to the European Union.

Ukip has galvanised British politics not because they are 'isolationists', but they believe we should be masters of our own destiny trading with the world at large without the EU telling us what we may or may not do. Ukip is proving a more effective opposition than Labour.

Like all of us, Nigel Farage has his faults, but there is no doubting his sincerity in his efforts to extricate us from the disastrous European Union.

Cameron, Milliband and Clegg are intent in compounding our subjugation to a federal Europe.

Robert Muir, Westgate on Sea

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AS part of our commitment to providing the best service to you, we have produced our 10 guiding principles which tie in with our parent company Archant's overall mission statement.

Archant's mission statement is: "We bring together motivated buyers and sellers through the creation of unique and compelling content and community expertise." This is summed up in the strapline 'Inspiring Communities'.

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Bluebells in Doddington

by **Colin Miles**
from Bapchild

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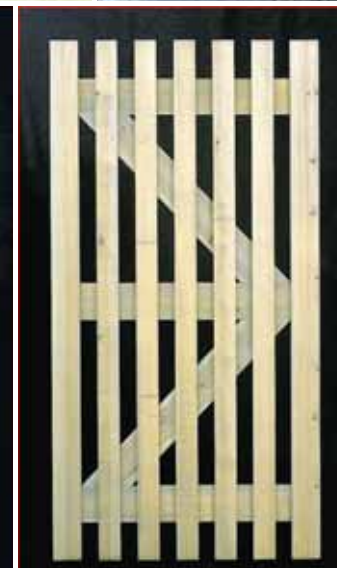


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Dreamland: council starts process to hire operator

By Maria Chiorando

maria.chiorando@archant.co.uk

EFFORTS to secure an organisation to operate the highly-anticipated Dreamland heritage park in Margate will step up a gear next month.

The park, touted to be a "world-class leisure attraction", is seen as the other key cog – along with the Turner Contemporary art gallery – in the regeneration of Margate and, from a wider point of view, Thanet.

Thanet District Council, which owns the entire site and plans to build an amusement park on it, has put together a funding package to start work on the project, though it has yet to find an operating company with the necessary technical expertise to run the park.

To solve that issue, the council cabinet will discuss plans for an open procurement process to identify a suitable candidate, when it meets on Thursday, May 1.

Plans for the first phase of the attraction include a restored Scenic Railway, historic rides and food and drink outlets.



REVIVAL: Dreamland's rebirth?

Further phases would then follow. The council has a management team on board to manage the project who have pulled together cost plans and are working through the costs and risks on a day-to-day basis.

Madeline Homer, director for community services, said: "Dreamland has the potential to be a major economic driver for the district.

"We're working incredibly hard behind the scenes to drive this development forward and will be doing all we can to keep the community up to date with our progress.

"Identifying a suitable operator to run the park is a major step in the journey, with the plan to open the first phase of the park in April 2015.

"Is this ambitious? Absolutely. Are there risks involved? Of course, but we're committed to keeping the momentum going and involving those with the appropriate skills and expertise to see this project through."

Freehold of the Dreamland site came into the council's ownership at the beginning of September 2013 through a compulsory purchase order.

Although the previous owner tried to appeal the order that October, its appeal was dismissed by judges in the Court of Appeal on the grounds that "the need for the regeneration for the economic and social benefit of Margate was overwhelming".

There has been no further legal challenge by the former owner of the Dreamland site, DreamlandLive, against the transfer of ownership of the land to the council.

Giggling Squid to open outlets

THAI restaurant chain the Giggling Squid is to open outlets in Maidstone and Sevenoaks this summer.

It already has branches in Brighton, Hove, Crawley, Henley-on-Thames, Tunbridge Wells, Reigate and Stratford-upon-Avon.

The Maidstone outlet will open in June, with the Sevenoaks restaurant starting a month later.

It opened its most recent branch in Horsham, West Sussex, on Thursday.

Chain secures a seat by cinema

FRANKIE & Benny's has been confirmed as the latest tenant for the St James' retail and leisure development in Dover.

The Restaurant Group has signed an agreement for the brand to take over a 4,300 sq ft unit next to the planned six-screen Cineworld cinema site.

The St James' development will total 120,000 sq ft of mixed-use retail and leisure, with parking for 445 vehicles in the centre of the port town.

Chamber blessing as airport cashes in on Manston crisis

LYDD Airport's expansion plans have received the support of the Kent Channel Chamber of Commerce – just days after it acquired a key deal as a consequence of the impending collapse at Manston.

With the Thanet airfield's future far from secure, charter services operated by Newmarket Holidays have been switched to Lydd.

It means that passengers will fly from there to Verona and Naples this June.

Tim Kidd, chief executive of the Kent Channel Chamber, making his first visit since his appointment in November, told members of Lydd's executive committee that the airport's £25 million development would bring desperately-needed job opportunities to the region and help boost the local economy.

Work on a 294-metre runway extension is expected to begin later this year.

Mr Kidd said: "I'm very excited about the development, which will bring much-needed investment into the area, so it was good to find out more about how the airport plans to deliver on this ambitious project.

"The chamber will be working very closely with the airport as it continues to expand and we will do everything we can to support it."

The airport's executive manager, Hani Mutlaq, said: "We look forward to fostering closer links with other chamber member businesses as we embark on the next phase of development."

The airport is now nearing completion of a number of pre-commencement conditions required to enable planning permission for the runway extension to be implemented.

Last month, the airport appointed specialist Capita to design and manage the extension.

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RHINE & MOSELLE RIVER CRUISE

Escorted Rail or Fly Cruise
8 days, full board, from **£699pp**
Departs 29 June & 3 August, 2014

QUOTE:
RH6/8-KOS

Join us for a relaxing river cruise taking-in the majestic Rhine and Moselle Valleys where we visit Andernach, Cochem, Boppard, Rudesheim, Koblenz and Konigswinter. Travel by rail from London St Pancras or by air from Heathrow or Gatwick to join the cruise in Cologne. Our river cruiser, the Prinses Christina, will host you in comfort and style with breakfast, lunch, dinner and late snacks.

INCLUDED:
• Escorted throughout • Return rail travel from London St Pancras to Cologne or flights with luggage from Heathrow or Gatwick - supp't may apply • 7 nights on full-board on the MV Prinses Christina sharing a twin outside cabin on Cabin Deck - upgrades available
• Welcome cocktail on arrival • Cup of coffee/tea each morning and afternoon • Captain's dinner on night before departure • Transfers abroad



BRAEMAR GATHERING & HIGHLAND STEAM

Escorted Holiday by rail
6 days, half board, **£609pp**
Departs 4 September, 2014

QUOTE:
BG9-KOS

Since 1848 the world-famous Braemar Gathering has been regularly attended by the reigning Monarch (as the Chieftain of the gathering) and members of the Royal Family. We will visit the gathering with reserved seating. We also tour the Trossachs and cruise on Loch Katrine; Ride the Strathspey Steam Railway to Aviemore; and visit Queens View and Pitlochry.

Note: Attendance by the Queen and Prince Charles not guaranteed

INCLUDED:
• Escorted throughout from London
• Return rail travel from London to Perth (also options to join at York, Newcastle and the hotel)
• 5 nights at a 3-star hotel in Perthshire with 5 dinners and 5 breakfasts
• Loch Katrine Cruise
• Ride on the Strathspey Railway
• Entry to Braemar Gathering - seated in open stand
• All transfers & touring in Scotland

TUSCANY COAST & COUNTRY EXPLORER



Escorted Holiday by rail
8 days, semi-all-inclusive, **£899pp**
Departs 23 May & 20 September, 2014

Come with us to incomparable Tuscany. The Tuscan seaside town of Forte dei Marmi has been described as the region's Beverly Hills and here we enjoy free drinks every night at our hotel. We will visit Lucca, Pisa, Florence and Porto Venere - with access to stunning Cinque Terra. There is also the opportunity to visit Portofino.

INCLUDED:
• Escorted throughout
• Return Eurostar & TGV rail travel London St Pancras to Nice (from Ebbsfleet on request)
• 1 night hotel B&B in or near Nice & 6 nights in Italy with 6 buffet breakfasts, 6 dinners & Free Drinks from 6pm to 10pm every night
• Excursions & transfers

QUOTE: TR5/9-KOS

GREAT HIGHLAND RAILWAYS & THE ISLE OF SKYE



Escorted Holiday by rail
6 days, half board, **£649pp**
Departs 18 June & 27 August, 2014

This magical holiday takes in one of the world's finest coast to coast railway journeys. The Inverness to the Kyle of Lochalsh line - as featured in Michael Palin's original Great Railway Journeys TV series - has spectacular views from the train all the way, passing Loch Carron, the Cullin Hills and the Isle of Skye. You will also enjoy a ride on the Strathspey Steam Railway, a visit to Loch Ness, with the option of a loch cruise, and a coach tour of the scenically-incomparable Scottish Highlands.

INCLUDED:
• Escorted throughout
• Return rail travel from London, York or Newcastle to Aviemore • 5 nights at a 3-star hotel in the Highlands with 5 dinners and 5 breakfasts
• Rail excursion to Kyle of Lochalsh
• Visit to the Isle of Skye • Trip on the Strathspey railway • All transfers & touring in Scotland

QUOTE: SC6/8-KOS

BRUSSELS' CARPET OF FLOWERS & BRUGES



Escorted Holiday by rail
4 days, **£359pp**
Departs 15 August, 2014

Come with us to see Belgium's Carpet of Flowers - set in the unique, ancient surroundings of the Grand-Place in Brussels. The beauty and diversity of the displays is truly magical. Our holiday starts with a glass of Bubbly at St Pancras famous Champagne bar before taking an early afternoon Eurostar direct to Brussels. We stay for 3 nights in a 4-star city-centre hotel and also visit the delightful city of Bruges.

INCLUDED:
• Escorted throughout
• Champagne Check-in at London St Pancras • Return Eurostar & TGV rail travel London St Pancras to Brussels (from Ebbsfleet on request) • 3 nights B&B stay at a 4-star hotel in Brussels • Excursion to Bruges by train • Transfers from station to hotel on arrival and departure

QUOTE: BC8-KOS

CHAMPAGNE CHECK-IN

SPECTACULAR CORSICA



Escorted Holiday by rail
10 days, half board, **£1099pp**
Departs 2 September, 2014

Corsica's landscape can change dramatically from glittering bays and fabulous beaches to jagged peaks and breathtaking valleys, dense forests and enigmatic hilltop villages. We travel to Corsica by rail from London St Pancras (from Ebbsfleet on request) to Nice where we stay overnight. We continue by ferry to Bastia, then to our 3-star seashore hotel in Calvi. Included excursions take in the best of the island. We return by ferry to Nice or Savona for an overnight stay, then to London by rail.

INCLUDED:
• Escorted throughout
• Return rail travel to Nice
• 2 nights hotel stay in or near Nice (Half Board outbound and *B&B on return)
• Return ferry to Corsica
• 7 nights half board hotel stay in Calvi, Corsica
• All excursions
• Transfers abroad

QUOTE: CR9-KOS

ZUNDERT FLOWER PARADE & ANTWERP



Escorted Holiday by rail
4 days, **£369pp**
Departs 5 September, 2014

Come with us on a charming break taking in the spectacular Zundert Flower Parade and Antwerp. The parade is made up of breathtaking displays entirely created by volunteers using dahlias - the largest of its kind in the world. Many of them are animated, giving a truly realistic appearance. The town is also renowned as the birth place of Vincent Van Gogh. Antwerp, Belgium's second biggest city, is our base for this break and is a true architectural wonder.

INCLUDED:
• Escorted throughout
• Return rail Eurostar travel from London St Pancras to Antwerp (from Ebbsfleet on request)
• 3 nights B&B stay at a 3-star hotel in Antwerp
• Excursion to Zundert Flower Parade including reserved seating
• Transfers from station to hotel on arrival and departure

QUOTE: AZ9-KOS

RHINE IN FLAMES RIVER CRUISE



Escorted Rail or Fly Cruise
5 days, from **£649pp**
Departs 2 October, 2014

This fun-packed cruise visits historic riverside towns including Andernach, Rudesheim, Koblenz and Boppard, where you'll see the Rhine in Flames festival. Originally held to celebrate the grape harvest, this spectacular pyrotechnics show features an illuminated flotilla of riverboats and curtains of fire, bathing the scene in a magical glow.

INCLUDED:
• Escorted throughout • Rail travel from London St Pancras to Cologne or flights with luggage from Heathrow or Gatwick - supp't may apply • 4 nights full-board cruise on the mps Princess sharing a twin bed outside cabin - upgrades available
• Beer, wine & choice of 2 Dutch spirits served at lunch & dinner and from 6pm to midnight at the bar • Entertainment
• Transfers abroad

QUOTE: RH10-KOS

Note: Price of Holidays by Air subject to flight availability at time of booking - supplement may apply

By Steve Loader
editorial@kosmedia.co.uk

1st Drive

Kia Soul

Price:	from £12,600
Driving appeal:	★★★
Image:	★★★★★
Space:	★★★★★
Value:	★★★★
Running costs:	★★★★
How green?:	★★★
Best rival:	Renault Captur

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SOUL TO SOUL: Kia's fashion icon is in its second guise and it has built on the original's looks and generous standard kit with added driver appeal

Soul's momentum grows

The Mark II version of Kia's popular fashion icon is far more upbeat than its predecessor and manages to retain all the original car's visual impact

It might be glib to condemn the original Kia Soul for lacking soul.

But Kia's 2009 bid to create a trendy, customisable style icon to match others like the Fiat 500 and BMW MINI was denied the heritage of that pair and the kind of interior quality taken for granted on more recent Kias.

On the other hand, it was good value and offered in various special editions, including the memorable black-and-red Soul Burner with pulsating speaker surrounds.

Pseudo-SUV looks also made it practical and the Soul might have sold bigger here but for UK supplies constrained by huge demand in the US, where the original was conceived and students and 'soccer moms' there adopted it.

Now we have a Mark II and, yes, it does have more soul and substance, while availability might also be better this time, according to Kia UK.

Driving it also highlights typically methodical ways that have enabled the Korean brand to transform itself inside a decade.

Everything likeable about the old car has been retained – looks and generous standard kit – while things that didn't impress – driving experience, interior and refinement – are all much better.

The Soul's Californian design team retained the original look, but it is sleeker this time, with nice touches like the porthole foglamps to the front and back of the car.

But the key change is simple: the Soul no longer flatters to deceive. Climb aboard and the car feels better



made, with higher-quality cabin plastics, smarter and more comfortable seats, snappy and compact steering wheel, big infotainment screen and nice design touches such as the 'pillar-style' air vents flanking the fascia and topped by speaker grilles.

And the upweighted quality is no cosmetic job – the doors close with a premium-model clunk rather than budget-car clang.

But it's out on the road that the new Soul's new class is most obvious. The chassis has been developed from Kia's excellent Ceed family hatch and there are modest increases to wheelbase and track, while height is also 1cm lower.

It all adds up to a better drive and far more refinement. The Soul will hang on to bends far better now and with less body-roll.

The car also has greater interior space overall and better legroom and headroom, while the high-lift tailgate has a wider opening to a 354-litre boot that is 4 per cent bigger than before.

Buyers have a choice of 1.6-litre

petrol (from £12,600) or diesel (£16,400) engines (130bhp and 126bhp respectively) driving the front wheels – despite the 'funky chunky' looks, there's still no 4x4 option.

Both powertrains are more refined than before, though neither is particularly good on fuel or low on CO₂ emissions for this class, so running costs may be an issue (petrol 41.5mpg combined cycle and from 158g/km of CO₂; diesel 56.5 and 132 respectively) although counterbalanced by Kia's industry-leading seven-year/100,000-mile warranty.

The diesel is the nicer drive, but the higher purchase price against the petrol makes the latter a clear winner for anyone covering a low annual mileage.

Three Soul trim levels are offered for now – Start, Connect and Connect Plus – to be joined by two style-statement models this autumn, the Soul Mixx (from £18,150) and Soul Maxx (from £19,950), both featuring smart 18-inch alloys and spec including body kit.

Other view...

the Petrolhead

Nice to hear it drives better, but can't say I'll be bothering. No amount of cosmetic add-ons will make it look anything but a van

She says

It looks very funky yet practical and I like the fact that Kia has looked at and sorted out all the previous weaknesses

the Eco-warrior

Until Kia addresses economy and CO₂ issues – on economic if not ecological grounds – there's not much soul appeal to me

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The official fuel consumption in mpg (l/100km) and CO₂ emissions (g/km) for the 308 range are: Urban 35.7 – 80.7 (7.9 – 3.5), Extra Urban 61.4 – 97.4 (4.6 – 2.9), Combined 48.7 – 91.1 (5.8 – 3.1) and CO₂ 134 – 82 (g/km). MPG figures are achieved under official EU test conditions, intended as a guide for comparative purposes only, and may not reflect actual on-the-road driving conditions. On the road prices quoted include delivery to dealership, number plates, 12 months' Government Vehicle Excise Duty and £55 Government First Registration Fee.



FirstGEAR

Motoring news



Desirable Aygo

TOYOTA claims to have boosted desirability for its next Aygo city car due soon, along with its Citroën C1 and Peugeot 108 clones.

Toyota chief engineer David Teraï says city-car design concentrates too often on practicality, compactness and price tag.

He said: "But all too often they lack desirability, the element that makes you truly want a car."

The Toyota chief engineer has pledged that the next Aygo will have much more enhanced street credibility.



Polo's big upgrade

ORDER books open this week for a heavily-upgraded VW Polo (from £11,100).

Cosmetic changes are few, but VW claims greater safety and comfort features, new touchscreen infotainment and navigation, plus cleaner and more efficient low-emission engines.

These include the impressive turbocharged 1.4-litre TSI engine with cylinder deactivation (ACT) – power has jumped to 148bhp.



Drive-E drives on

ALL Volvos will be available from May with the Swedish marque's Drive-E powertrains, which have earned rave reviews for blending drivability and economy.

Too often the green option in a car range means sacrificing driving pleasure for economy, but Drive-E has overturned that assumption; the 190bhp Volvo V40 D4 diesel manual (pictured) emits a road-tax-exempt 99g/km CO₂ and returns 74.3mpg (official combined).

BACK ON FORM: Peugeot's 308 has a stylish and compact design, it feels well screwed together and has some powerful yet very frugal engine options

Brand new 308 ensures Peugeot is no soft touch



PEUGEOT 308 1.6 e-HDi ACTIVE

Price:	£18,695
Driving appeal:	★★★★
Image:	★★★★
Space:	★★★★★
Value:	★★★★★
Running costs:	★★★★★
Reliability:	★★★★
How green?:	★★★★★
Road tax:	zero
Best rival:	VW Golf

Kent dealers

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Northgate, Canterbury	01227 828200

Robins & Day:

Maidstone	01622 753333
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FIRST encounters with newly-launched cars can be exciting but occasionally blind you to faults all too obvious when road-test time comes around.

Fortunately, that wasn't the case after I had the smart new Peugeot 308 for a few days; this is a car that has grown on me.

It has style, feels well screwed together and doesn't appear to have a real weakness. Admittedly, despite an obvious intention by Peugeot to challenge the VW Golf, it doesn't threaten the German star for out and out handling and build quality and there are a few niggles, but the 308 is a winner for style and the forthcoming SW estate version will add to the appeal of the range.

At the very least, the newcomer – Europe's Car of the Year 2014 – has rectified two generations of under-performance by Peugeot in the family-hatch segment and shown that the French marque will no longer be a soft touch here.

It has some tough opposition, though, not just from the Golf but the Ford Focus, Vauxhall Astra, Honda Civic and new SEAT Leon – arguably all better to drive but some lacking the new 308's charm.



Lion brand roars back into competitive family hatchback sector with sharp-suited, distinctive newcomer, the Car of the Year 2014, writes **Steve Loader**

The five-door car looks slick and classy inside and out, with an environmentally-friendly aerodynamic shape and high-quality cabin materials – well up to the high standards Peugeot has set lately.

It's roomy and comfortable to be in, too, and the 470-litre boot, extending to 1,309-litre with rear seats down, is one of the biggest in class despite the 308's compact looks.

Unfortunately, I'm still not sure about the driving position; though completely adjustable, it took some fine-tuning for me to ensure the steering wheel did not obscure some part of the instrumentation.

I still think the touchscreen is a bit fussy, even if it will probably become second nature to most.

The 308 uses a new modular platform, tipped to underpin many other new Peugeots, plus many new technologies, allowing it to be up to 140 kilos lighter than before – equivalent to two adult passengers.

Added to a long wheelbase with short overhangs, this makes the 308 light and nimble, not to mention economical and eco-friendly.

Prices start at £14,495, with a typically diverse array of powerful and flexible petrol and diesel engines, most with stop-start

systems to keep CO₂ emissions low.

The eco star at launch was the 1.6-litre 92PS (90bhp) unit offering a road-tax-exempt 93g/km of CO₂ emissions and an impressive 78.4mpg economy on the combined cycle, but Peugeot has just launched a BlueHdi model offering 82g/km and a staggering 91.1mpg respectively, which also sounds like the gauntlet has been thrown down to smash the 100mpg barrier with a conventional family car.

We tested the 115bhp 1.6-litre e-HDi in mid-range Active trim, no slouch itself on the economy front and emitting a road-tax-exempt 95g/km of CO₂; the onboard computer said I mostly came close to the official combined cycle 76.3mpg and the diesel engine was smooth and refined – typical of the marque.

Trim levels are familiar – Access, Active, Allure and Feline – with the middle ones finding most favour.

Generous standard kit includes air-con, remote central locking, cruise-control with speed limiter, DAB digital radio, LED daylight running lights and Bluetooth connectivity.

Trading up to our Active, though, brings dual-zone air-con, rear parking sensors, integrated 9.7-inch touch screen and sat-nav.

Feline flagships also get the brand's impressive Cielo full panoramic glass roof – a buyers' favourite on other Peugeots.

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To find out more visit kia.co.uk

Fuel consumption figures in mpg (l/100km) for the all-new Kia Soul are: Urban 31.0 (9.1) – 46.3 (6.1), Extra Urban 44.8 (6.3) – 64.2 (4.4), Combined 38.7 (7.3) – 56.5 (5.0). CO₂ emissions are 170 – 132 g/km.

MPG figures are official EU test figures for comparative purposes and may not reflect real driving results. *Model shown: Soul 'Connect Plus' 1.6 GDI 130bhp 6-speed manual @ £15,600 including £300 early buyer reward and excluding metallic paint at £490. Offer valid between 08 April and 30 June 2014. Participating dealers only. Price and specification correct at time of going to press. The Infinity® word mark and logo are registered trademarks and owned by Harman International Industries, Inc. † Specification available on Soul 'Connect Plus' models. 7 year / 100,000 mile manufacturer's warranty. For full terms, conditions and exclusions visit kia.co.uk

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Evidence of continual professional development Teaching and Assessing Course or equivalent

To discuss this opportunity, or to arrange an informal visit, please contact:

Carolyn Flegg, Outpatients Manager 07925 978812

Staff Nurse – Ashford

Part time Hours: 23.0 per week Closing date: ongoing

Salary: £23,000 - £24,000 (pro-rata) dependant on experience

Qualifications

Registered Nurse 1st Level

Evidence of continual professional development

Experience in a surgical/medical environment with a knowledge and understanding of surgical/ medical procedures

To discuss this opportunity, or to arrange an informal visit, please contact:

Liz Justice, on 01233 616202

HR Assistant – Dover

Full time Hours: 37.5 per week (6 month contract) Closing date: 2/05/2014

Salary: £20,000 per annum

Qualifications

Maths and English GCSE A-C or equivalent CIPD Qualification 2 years experience working in a HR environment

To discuss this opportunity, or to arrange an informal visit, please contact:

Mandy Oliver, 01304 245946

Administrator (Theatres/Endoscopy) – Margate

Part time Hours: 22.5 per week Closing date: 2/05/2014

Salary: £18,000 (pro-rata)

Qualifications

Maths and English to GCSE or equivalent Competent in IT skills (Word, Excel, Booking systems) NVQ in customer service

To discuss this opportunity, or to arrange an informal visit, please contact:

Dennis Sutton, 07833 237881

For a job description and application form please visit www.spencerprivatehospitals.com/careers

Alternatively, please contact Jo Wright, Senior HR Assistant

Telephone: 01304 245961

E-mail: joanne.wright@spencerhospitals.com

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LEGAL AND PUBLIC NOTICES



THE TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING (DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT PROCEDURE) (ENGLAND) ORDER 2010

The following applications have been submitted for consideration by the Council:

Y13/0682/SH - Macfarlanes Nurseries Canterbury Road
Swingfield Dover Kent - Siting of 8 holiday lodges around new lake and pitch and putt course, provision of skating rink and children's play areas, creation of large display garden and other associated works in connection with the change of use of the site to a mixed use garden centre and leisure/visitor destination.

Y14/0460/SH# - The Grange Dennes Lane Lydd Romney Marsh Kent - Change of use of workshop/garage to a holiday let.

Y14/0466/SH - Great Woodland Farm Woodland Road Lyminge Folkestone Kent - Use of existing granary as ancillary accommodation incorporating a new porch and access steps, replacement windows and other external alterations.

Y14/0467/SH - Great Woodland Farm Woodland Road Lyminge Folkestone Kent - Listed building consent for the use of existing granary as ancillary accommodation incorporating a new porch and access steps, replacement windows, doors and rainwater goods and provision of internal partition walls.

Y14/0507/SH - 22 Beacon Way Lymyne Hythe Kent CT21 4LJ - Felling of a Sycamore tree and crown reduction of a Beech tree the subject of Tree Preservation Order No.21 of 2008.

Y14/0492/SH - Unit 3 Centurion Park Caesars Way Folkestone Kent CT19 4AH - Proposed conversion of warehouse unit (Class B8) by the insertion of a full floor and works to the unit frontage, to a Childrens' Nursery at ground floor level (max 67 children) and Laser Tag Centre at first floor level (Class D1/D2) (in association with the adjacent Children's Play Centre) together with creation of an outdoor play area, installation of flue and parking provision.

Y14/0482/SH - The Farmhouse Acrise Mews Oak Hill Acrise Folkestone - Demolition and rebuilding of four chimney stacks and a porch, together with the insertion of two windows at first floor level in the side elevation and alteration of surrounding ground levels

Y14/0483/SH† - Fountain Stores The Green Saltwood Hythe Kent - Works to trees within a conservation area comprising the felling of a Pine (T1) and a Holly (T2) and 2 metre reduction in height and 1.5 metre reduction in laterals of a Bay (T3), followed by the planting of two Cherry trees.

Y14/0478/SH† - Spicers Court Stade Street Hythe Kent CT21 6EB - Installation of a replacement entrance door.

Y14/0479/SH - Cage Farm Stowting Hill Stowting Ashford Kent - Listed Building consent for the construction of part single storey/ part two storey side/rear extension.

Y14/0484/SH† - Two Firs The Green Saltwood Hythe Kent - Works to trees within a conservation area comprising a 3 metre reduction in height back to previous points of a Conifer (T1) and a 2.5 metre reduction in height of a Holly (T2)

Y14/0485/SH† - Old Dairy Cottage The Green Saltwood Hythe Kent - Crown reduction back to previous points of an Ash tree situated within a conservation area

Y14/0431/SH - 85 Bouverie Road West Folkestone Kent CT20 2PW - Erection of replacement porch.

Any representations should be made in writing to the Head of Planning, Shepway District Council, Civic Centre, Castle Hill Avenue, Folkestone, Kent, CT20 2QY or emailed to planning@shepway.gov.uk. Comments should be made in writing within 21 days from the date of publication. It should be noted that any representations received will be made available for public inspection.

Some applications can be viewed at other locations in addition to the Civic Centre, Folkestone. The applications are marked as follows:

- The One Stop Shop, Magpies, Church Approach, New Romney

† - Hythe Town Council Offices, Stade Street, Hythe

Applications can be viewed and comments made online at <http://searchplanapps.shepway.gov.uk/online-applications/>.

The applications marked (*) do not accord with the provisions of the development plan in force in the area in which the land to which the application relates is situated.

C Lewis, Head of Planning
Shepway District Council

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9. Applicable Law
9.1. Nothing in these conditions shall exclude or limit Our liability for death or personal injury caused by Our negligence, for Our fraud or otherwise to the extent it would be illegal to do so.
- 9.2. These Conditions shall be governed by and construed in accordance with the laws of England and Wales.

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LEGAL AND PUBLIC NOTICES



THE KENT COUNTY COUNCIL (THE DISTRICT OF SHEPWAY)

(FOLKESTONE TOWN CENTRE AND THE BAYLE PARKING ZONE) ORDER 2012

(AMENDMENT NO 3) (ZONE A1 TIMES OF OPERATION) ORDER 2014

Notice is hereby given that KENT COUNTY COUNCIL proposes the above Order under Sections 1, 2, 32, 44, 45 and 124 of and Part IV of Schedule 9 of the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984, and of all other enabling powers, and after consultation with the chief officer of police in accordance with Part III of Schedule 9 to the Act:

The Order proposes to implement new parking restrictions in the following streets:

ROADS IN FOLKESTONE

Limited waiting 2 hour no return within 4 hours [8am – 6pm Mondays to Saturdays (both days inclusive)] – Bouverie Road West – All time limited waiting parking places between Castle Hill Avenue and Christ Church Road; Cheriton Road – East side, from a point 24.5 metres north of its junction with Sandgate Road, north for a distance of 94.1 metres; Christ Church Road – All time limited parking places between Bouverie Road West and Sandgate Road; Grace Hill – South west side, from a point 28.4 metres north west of its junction with Rendezvous Street, north west to a point 22.9 metres south east of its junction with Shellons Street; Sandgate Road – All time limited parking places between Castle Hill Avenue and a point 67.6 metres south west of its junction with Bouverie Place; Shellons Street – South east side, from a point 25 metres south west of its junction with Grace Hill, south west for a distance of 35 metres; The Leas – South east side, from a point 11.2 metres west of its junction with Road of Remembrance, south west for a distance of 15.7 metres; West Terrace – south west, from a point 46.6 metres south east of its junctions with Bouverie Place, south east for a distance of 12.5 metres.

A copy of the proposed Order, a copy of any Orders which may be affected by it, and a statement of the council's reasons for proposing the Order can be inspected at the Civic Centre, Castle Hill Avenue, Folkestone, CT20 2QY, during normal office hours.

If you have any views about the proposed Order you should make them in writing to (Zone A), TRO Consultation, Parking Services, Shepway District Council, Civic Centre, Castle Hill Avenue, Folkestone, CT20 2QY. Or email TRO.Consultation@shepway.gov.uk or stating "Zone A" in the subject title.

We must receive any representations before 5pm on Monday 5th May 2013 for them to be considered. For legal reasons we cannot accept representations over the phone or in person.

If you have any questions concerning the Order or require further information please contact Shepway District Council (Transportation Department), Council Offices, Castle Hill Avenue, Folkestone, CT20 2QY (01303 853240 during normal office hours).

This notice is published by Shepway District Council on behalf of Kent Highway Services, County Hall, Maidstone, ME14 1XX. Kent Highway Services is part of Kent County Council.



TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING ACT 1990 PLANNING (LISTED BUILDINGS AND CONSERVATION AREAS) ACT 1990

Swale Borough Council as Local Planning Authority has received the following applications which are being advertised to ascertain the views of persons living near the sites and other interested parties. The proposed developments relate to one or more of the following:

1. The site of the application is within/affecting a designated Conservation Area (Section 73) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990.
2. The proposed development may affect the Listed Building or it's setting.
3. The application is for a Major Development.
4. The application would affect a right of way to which Part III of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) applies.
7. This application affects trees covered by a Tree Preservation Order.

REPRESENTATIONS IN RESPECT OF THE FOLLOWING APPLICATIONS MUST BE MADE BY 05 MAY 2014

SW/14/0183:
Listed Building Consent to remove modern render to the rear of No.67 and to replace with weatherboarding - 67-69 The Street, BOUGHTON; REASONS 1 & 2

SW/14/0306:
Replacement of existing gas cylinders with small scale standby electricity generator plant - Old Gas Works, Brielle Way, SHEERNESS; REASON 4

SW/14/0348:
Listed building consent for external repairs - Leaveland Court, LEAVELAND; REASON 2

SW/14/0358:
Change of use from agriculture to breeding, keeping, training and accommodating horses for leisure and recreation industry, including erection of stables (2 bays for breeding and 4 bays for DIY livery) and feed storage - Land to the north of Lower Road, MINSTER; REASONS 3 & 4

SW/14/0383:
To extend car parking using grassland at rear of car park - Land opposite Cockleshell Walk Car Park, St Michaels Road, SITTINGBOURNE; REASON 2

SW/14/0395:
Listed Building Consent for reconfiguration of steps to front corner entrance to form a suitable access. Alterations to gents WC lobby and re-design of cellar/store to rear trade area to form a new wheelchair accessible WC and new cellar/store together with the installation of new glazed screen and double doors - The Chimney Boy, 59 Preston Street, FAVERSHAM; REASONS 1 & 2

SW/14/0401:
Extension to nursery - Sheerness Children & Families Centre, Seashells, Rose Street, SHEERNESS; REASON 4

SW/14/0402:
Disabled access ramp & guarding - All Saints Church, Church Road, SITTINGBOURNE; REASON 2

SW/14/0405:
Variation of condition 5 of planning permission SW/04/1344 to allow occupation from 1st March to 2nd January - Vanity Holiday Park, Leysdown Road, LEYSDOWN; REASONS 3 & 4

SW/14/0409:
New bungalow dwelling in garden to existing bungalow dwelling - Land Adj 31 Cliff Drive, WARDEN; REASON 7

Particulars of the proposal(s) can be obtained from Planning Services, Swale Borough Council, Swale House, East Street, Sittingbourne, where copies of the applications and all documents submitted with them may be inspected during office hours; any representations should be made in writing to this address.

James Freeman

TARA LIMITED NEXT LEVEL HOUSE, THAMES ROAD, CRAYFORD, KENT DA1 4QH is applying to change an existing licence as follows. To add an operating centre to keep 3 goods vehicles and 6 trailers at AYLESFORD HERITAGE LIMITED, AYLESFORD QUARRY, ROCHESTER ROAD, AYLESFORD, MAIDSTONE KENT ME20 7DJ. Owners or occupiers of land (including buildings) near the operating centre who believe that their use of enjoyment of that land would be affected, should make written representations to the Traffic Commissioner at Hillcrest House, 386 Harehills Lane, Leeds LS9 6NF, stating their reasons within 21 days of this notice. Representatives must at the same time send a copy of their representations to the applicant at the address given at the top of this notice. A Guide to Making Representations is available from the Traffic Commissioner's office.

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TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING ACT 1990 PLANNING APPLICATIONS LISTED BUILDING CONSENTS CONSERVATION AREA CONSENTS

DOV/14/00146 Erection of a single storey rear, two storey and first floor side extensions, and conversion of garage to habitable room (existing conservatory to be demolished)
2 Yew Tree Close, Deal, CT14 9UX CAF

DOV/14/00320 Erection of 4no. dwellings on site of former builder's yard including demolition of existing buildings and part re-use of existing materials
Duke Of Yorks Royal Military School, Deal Gregory's Yard, r/o, 67 High Street, Wingham, CT3 1AA SLC

DOV/14/00335 Internal alterations at Clive, Wellington, Wolfe and Marlborough dormitory blocks to improve the level of accommodation provided
Duke Of Yorks Royal Military School, Deal Road, Guston, Dover, CT15 5EQ SLB

DOV/13/00783 Outline application for the redevelopment of the site to provide a foodstore with associated car parking, petrol filling station (to include associated kiosk and car washing facilities), access and servicing arrangements and landscaping (to include removal of existing surface infrastructure) (additional details)
Discovery Park, Enterprise Zone, Ramsgate Road, Sandwich, CT13 9ND MD

DOV/14/00300 Installation of replacement windows and front door
Hoodenens, 44 New Street, Sandwich, CT13 9BB CON

DOV/14/00325 Removal of Conditions (iii) & (iv) of planning permission DO/81/1136 to change the use of The Old Stables to a residential dwelling (application under section 73)
Castleton, Campbell Road, Walmer, CT14 7ED CON

DOV/14/00338 Variation of Conditions 40, 88,110 and 112 of planning permission DOV/13/00120 (application under Section 73)
Aylesham Village Expansion, Aylesham, Canterbury MAJ

Reason for Advert Codes:-

CON - Within Conservation Area

CAF - The proposal affects a Conservation Area

SLB - To affect the setting of a Listed Building

MAJ - Major Development

SLC - To affect setting of a Listed Building & Conservation Area

MD - Proposal is a major development and a departure from the Development Plan

Some applications are not publicised in this list. All applications may be inspected at the Council Offices, White Cliffs Business Park, Dover, to which address any representations (to include a postal address) should be sent **within 21 days** marked "for the attention of Planning". Applications may also be viewed, and comments on applications may be made on our website www.dover.gov.uk/planning or at Dover Gateway, 71 Castle Street, Dover, Deal Library or the Area Office, The Guildhall, Sandwich

Failure to meet the above deadline may jeopardise the chances of representations being considered. Any representations received may be made available for inspection by the public, and may be copied to others, including the secretary of state and the applicant if there is an appeal against the council's decision. Representations will not be acknowledged until an application has been determined.

Please note that the Council does not accept any responsibility for any incomplete or inaccurate description of any application.

Town and Country Planning Acts

The Council is required to give notice of the following applications

14/00920/HOUSE Oakhurst Lodge 76 Mount Ephraim, Culverden
- Glass structure at rear (LB) (CA)

14/00921/LBC Oakhurst Lodge 76 Mount Ephraim, Culverden
- Listed Building Consent - Single storey rear conservatory (LB)

14/00962/FULL New Diamond Chinese Take-Away 51 Grosvenor Road, Culverden
- Conversion of existing basement office/storage area into accommodation/office area (CA)

14/01019/HOUSE Manor Grange Hurstwood Lane, Culverden
- Erection of greenhouse (CA)

14/01047/LBC Great Hungerden Cottage Green Lane, Frittenden
- Listed Building Consent - First floor rear extension over catslide roof, conservatory on south elevation and single-storey extension on north elevation; Internal alterations and repairs (LB)

14/00956/FULL St Ronans School Water Lane, Hawkhurst
- Construction of synthetic surfaced multi-use games area, with fencing and DDA compliant access (LB)

14/00977/HOUSE South View Green Road, Horsmonden
- Replacement conservatory at rear (CA)

14/01011/HOUSE Remingtons Lamberhurst Road, Horsmonden
- Alterations to vehicle entrance (LB)

14/01018/HOUSE School House Farm School House Lane, Horsmonden
- Retrospective: Replace existing rotten shed with 1.8m x 2.4m shed, install LPG tank, installation of 2 satellite aerials for house and barn and 3m x 11m shed (LB)

14/01026/FULL Dundale Farm Dundale Road, Lamberhurst
- Variation of Condition 1 of TW/04/03215/FULMJ (Appeal Decision APP/M2270/A/05/1186843): change of use of an existing agricultural building to curling rink and associated facilities. Condition to be amended - The premises shall be used as a curling rink with ancillary features and as an events venue (MAJOR)

14/01022/HOUSE 36 Claremont Road Royal Tunbridge Wells, Pantiles & St Marks
- Rear second floor extension (CA)

14/00834/LBC Tunbridge Wells Police Station Crescent Road, Park
- Listed Building Consent - Entrance sign and intercom (LB)

14/01051/HOUSE 3 6 Henwood Green Road Pembury, Pembury
- Demolition of existing garage and car port and erection of 1 1/2 storey annexe (LB)

14/01006/LBC Clock Tower Monument The Green, Sandhurst
- Listed Building Consent: Repairs to the fabric of the building (LB)

14/00783/FULL The Nightingales London Road, Southborough Town Council
- Change of use of 2nd floor Class C1 bed and breakfast accommodation to residential use to create a single residential use on ground, first and second floors (LB)

(DEVPLN) Departure from the Development Plan (PROW) Affecting A Public Right of way (CA) Affecting a Conservation Area (LB) Affecting a Listed Building (MAJOR) Major Applications (MAST) Mast Applications (EIA) Applications Accompanied by an EIA Statement.

You may view these applications on our website (www.tunbridgewells.gov.uk), at The Old Fire Station, Stone Street, Cranbrook or at Gateway, 8 Grosvenor Road, Tunbridge Wells. We accept comments online, by email to planningcomments@tunbridgewells.gov.uk or in writing to the address below. Comments should be made within 21 days from the date of this notice, although we may accept them after this date.

You should quote the reference and be aware that we make all comments available for inspection, placing them on the file and publishing them on the internet. We do not publish signatures, telephone numbers or email addresses on the internet.

James Freeman
Head of Planning Services, Tunbridge Wells Borough Council
Town Hall, Royal Tunbridge Wells TN1 1RS

Dated: 19 April 2014



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CUED UP: Barry Hawkins lost to Ronnie O'Sullivan in last year's Crucible Theatre final, top, but won the Players' Championship last month, bottom

Sport

Hawkins all ready for another shot at title in melting pot of the Crucible

David Mairs talks to county snooker hero Barry Hawkins, who is hoping to go one better this year after losing in the final of the 2013 World Championship to Ronnie O'Sullivan

IT is an unfortunate truth but, given the size and population of the county, Kent is not well endowed with successful sporting teams or, for that matter, sportsmen and women.

One of those to whom we can lay claim, however, sets out shortly on his wholly realistic bid to become champion of the world.

Barry Hawkins lives in Ditton, near Maidstone, and is ranked the fourth-best snooker-player on the planet.

This weekend the World Championship starts at Sheffield's Crucible Theatre and he will be looking to go one better than last season, when he lost to the undeniable talent of Ronnie O'Sullivan.

Speaking to Hawkins at the start of this week, was it fair to assume that every spare second would be spent practising on the green baize up until the start of the big event itself?

"I think that's what I used to do," he said. "But nowadays, with so many tournaments, that doesn't work so much. Since the PTC [the Players' Championship, which he won last month], I've only started playing again in the last few days, so by the time of the championship I'll have been practising for 10 or 11 days."

And the World Championship at the Crucible – still the big one after so much change in the world of snooker?

"Yes, this is the one everyone focuses on," said Hawkins.

"It's our blue-chip event – Sheffield is absolutely buzzing when the tournament is on. It's a chance to make a name for yourself."

At the time we spoke, he didn't know who he would be playing in the first round as the qualifiers had yet to be decided, with only the top 16 seeded players getting an automatic place in the championship proper.

He did, though, appreciate the presence of some big names among the qualifiers. There would, to use that glorious football cliché, be no easy games.

"There's so many good players but, to be honest, ideally you'd like to draw a Crucible debutant as the place can make you quite nervous... even then,

though, I wouldn't expect it to be easy."

In the event, Hawkins was drawn against David Gilbert, who will be making his third tournament appearance.

The PTC win was Hawkins's biggest title success, but he still places his achievement at finishing runner-up in last year's World Championship at a different level.

"To actually win a tournament – it's the biggest win of my career so far – was special, but last year was the bigger occasion.

"Not many people can say they've been to the final of the World Championship – it was a great achievement."

And as for this year? There are a lot of good players, obviously, and of course there's O'Sullivan, arguably the most naturally gifted man to have ever picked up a cue.

"Well, I don't want to get too confident, but I've got as good as a chance as anybody. Yes, Ronnie [O'Sullivan] is without a doubt miles in front, and there's also Ding Junhui, who's an incredible talent," said the Ditton man.

"As for Ronnie, I think you've just got to tell yourself that you can beat him. I let him off a couple of times in the final and you can't afford that."

O'Sullivan's ability has never been in question, but he hasn't always enjoyed a favourable image in the media or possibly among his fellow players, given his sometimes ambivalent approach to the sport that has brought him fame and fortune.

Hawkins, however, chooses not to portray him in a negative light.

“To actually win a tournament is special, but not many people can say they’ve been to the final of the World Championship – it was a great achievement”

Barry Hawkins
on his success

"He's more approachable now – I think he's trying to work on that side of things," he said.

Some in the sport believe O'Sullivan should show snooker more respect, but again Hawkins avoids criticising the temperamental player, who has repeatedly threatened to quit the game.

"I'm used to hearing that sort of stuff, although I know others think he's big-headed. I can see where he's from coming from sometimes – it can take over your life and you get obsessive about playing perfect snooker, but it isn't like that."

So does 34-year-old Hawkins himself have any regrets about his chosen path?

"Not at all. Looking back now, I wouldn't change anything. To look back on the experiences I've had and how much I've travelled the world, I've been very fortunate."

And there's the money. The PTC win earned Hawkins £100,000 and a quick internet check suggests he can't be far off millionaire status, but he plays down the figures.

"Don't believe what you read on the internet. There hasn't always been that much money and it's all been over a long period of time – I don't think I'm a millionaire," he said.

Even so, it all must seem a long way from those early days when a living income was not guaranteed.

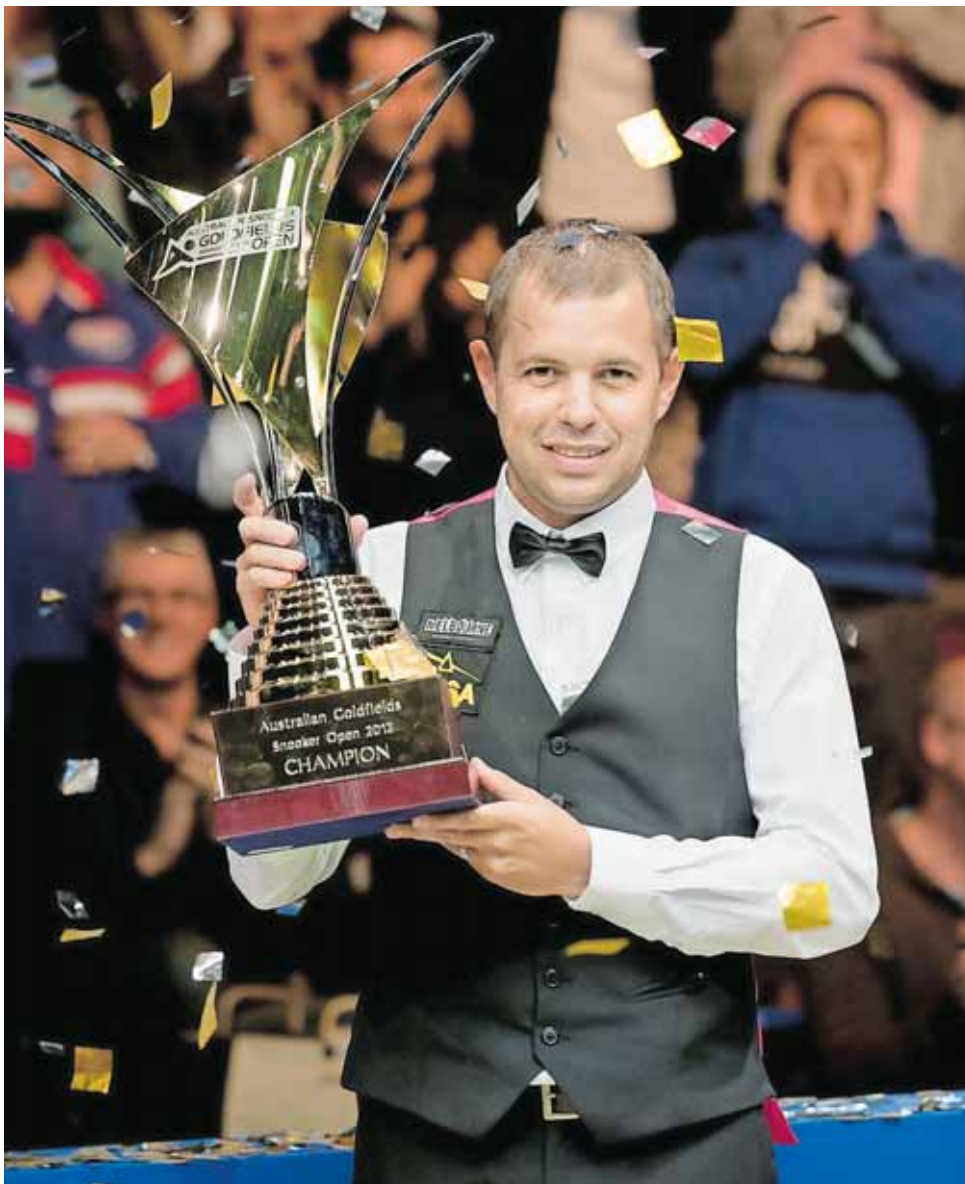
"There were tough times financially," he said. "A sponsor paid me a small wage and I was living at home with no mortgage, but the game was up and down every year and you didn't know if it was going to survive."

In truth, the Hawkins snooker story could have ended pretty much before it began. He almost "jacked it in" when he was 16 or 17 and was looking to other career possibilities.

"I'd gone to a job interview but didn't get it. If I had, that could have been the end of the snooker, but a few friends phoned up and convinced me to carry on," he said.

Today the game is strong and Hawkins is quick to credit one particular promoter with turning around its fortunes.

"Before Barry Hearn took charge, it



was nearly over – there were only six or so tournaments a year and it was at rock bottom.

“We never had two tours in snooker, but there was a lot of talk of it and the game could have gone down that route, but thankfully it didn’t happen.

“It was off-putting – you were trying to build your career and earn money, but you never knew from month to month whether you’d be playing.”

Matters today are clearly improved and snooker is regaining much of the ground it had clearly lost.

“There’s still a lot to sort out, but now there are tournaments every couple of weeks and there’s a lot of opportunity to earn money,” he said.

“The interest was always there, but the people running snooker didn’t know how to sell it.

“Barry has a lot of contacts and with [his company] Matchroom we’ve now got people who can run it and generate interest.”

Hawkins plays about 20 tournaments a year now, many of them ranking events, together with “a couple of other little ones”.

The downside to the thankfully busy itinerary is the amount of travel and the time he spends away from wife Tara and five-year-old son Harrison, but he says it’s “something I try to deal with a bit better now”.

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“I was living on an estate in London and we just decided to walk down the hill to the snooker hall. As soon as I started playing, I fell in love with it.”

Barry Hawkins reveals how he got into snooker

The internal flights in China, for example, can be gruelling, but, as he accepts, he “can’t complain too much as it’s what I chose as my job”.

No coincidence, that mention of China, as it is here that Hawkins sees the game – and players – developing most strongly.

“There are some incredible players there – some of them are only 16 and they’re phenomenal.

“When they put their minds to it, they take some stopping.”

So he’d better get his trophy wins in quick, I venture.

He laughs and says: “Yes, I’ve got to make the most of it while I can.”

And how long might that be?

“I’m hoping that if I do everything right I’ve got a good 10 years left in me

at least – I’d hope to still be in the top 16, Mark Davis is 41 and he’s playing the best snooker of his life, so there’s no reason why not.”

As snooker’s profile is raised, it’s likely that so should that of one of Kent’s premier sportsmen. Indeed, it’s arguable he hasn’t received anything like the recognition he deserves.

Again, though, he is sanguine.

“It’s only been the last two or three years that I’ve started to do well. If I carry on, I might get a bit more recognition, but I’m not worried about that side of things. I’m not playing because I want recognition – I just want to achieve what I can as a sportsman.”

With the future looking bright, you can but wonder what sparked the initial interest in a sport that now defines his life to a large extent.

“I was living on an estate [in Tulse Hill, London] and we just decided to walk down the hill to the snooker hall. As soon as I started playing, I fell in love with it. We couldn’t afford to spend a long time on the tables, so they let us brush them in return for some free playing time.”

So, whisper it quietly, but the popular internet site that shows his birthplace as Ditton is wrong. How does the man himself view his roots?

“I’m a London boy, really, but I’ve been in Kent for about 10 years and I enjoy living here – it’s a lot nicer.”

That’ll do – he’s one of ours.

NTW

Dynamos just miss out in southern play-off defeat

INVICTA Dynamos’ ice-hockey season was extinguished in the final 20 minutes of last weekend’s NIHL southern play-off against Wightlink Raiders.

Having gone down 4-3 on the Isle of Wight on Saturday, Dynamos started well in the return fixture at Gillingham the following day, Nicky Lewis (the home side’s man of the match) and Daniel Hammond both scoring to give them a 5-4 aggregate lead.

Wightlink upped their game in a scrappy second period and Loris Taylor levelled the aggregate score, meaning that it all hung on the final 20-minute period.

Sadly for Dynamos, however, goals from Canadian Matt Vizzari and Richard Facey gave Wightlink a 3-2 win on the night and a 7-5 aggregate victory.



ACTION: Peter Beerling



LOOKING FORWARD: Matt Fish

Fish plays an hour to lift Gills hopes

MATT Fish has started his Gillingham comeback by playing in a development game at Southend United on Tuesday.

The right-back, who was injured in the first few minutes of the opening game of the season against Colchester United, ruptured his anterior cruciate knee ligament and was ruled out for the entire campaign as a result.

However, after help from the club’s medical department and hard work from the player himself, he may yet be in a position to appear for the first team before the end of the season.

Fish, 24, played 60 minutes against Southend, which the home side won 5-0.

Speedway kings and more kings

THE second season of speedway at Central Park in Sittingbourne gets under way on Easter Monday (April 21) with the Kent CTA Fire Kings taking on the King’s Lynn Young Stars in the Easter Trophy.

The visitors were championship runners-up in last year’s National League and are sure to pose a strong challenge to the Kings, keen to get their home season off to a winning start after two victories already secured on the road.

The final place in the Kings line-up will be ‘job-shared’ over the next four matches between reigning GB Grass Track junior champion Luke Harris and a newcomer to the sport this year and a convertee from motocross, Danny Ayres.

With both prospects looking lively on their first outings around the Central Park circuit, the decision was made to split the next four matches between the two riders and see who most rises most impressively to the challenge.

On Easter Monday it will be Harris who will wear the new-look No 6 race jacket, with Newmarket-based Ayres expected to feature in the match after that and so on until the management are expected to decide on a more fixed position.

Gates open at 1.30pm, with tapes up at 3pm.

Kent lose their first match of the season

KENT suffered a crushing defeat in their first match of the season in Division Two of the LV County Championship.

Needing 266 to beat Worcestershire at New Road on Wednesday,

they were dismissed for a paltry 140 to go down by 125 runs.

Brendan Nash (28) and Darren Stevens (27) top-scored for Kent in their second innings.

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